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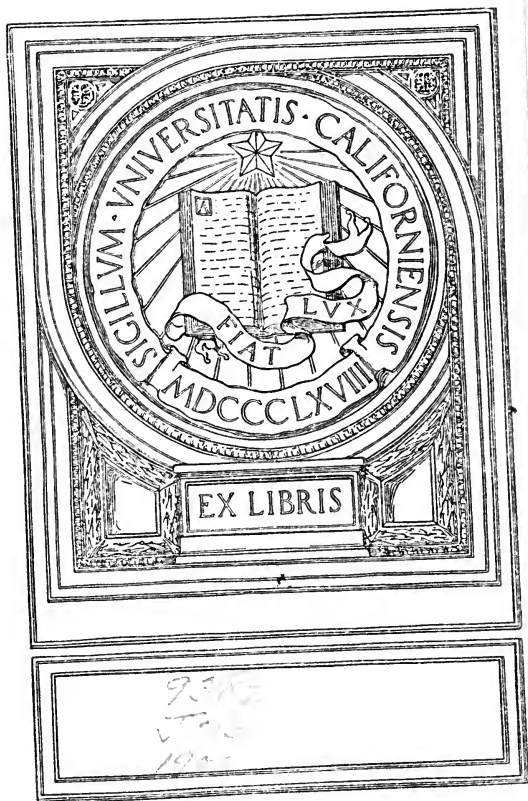
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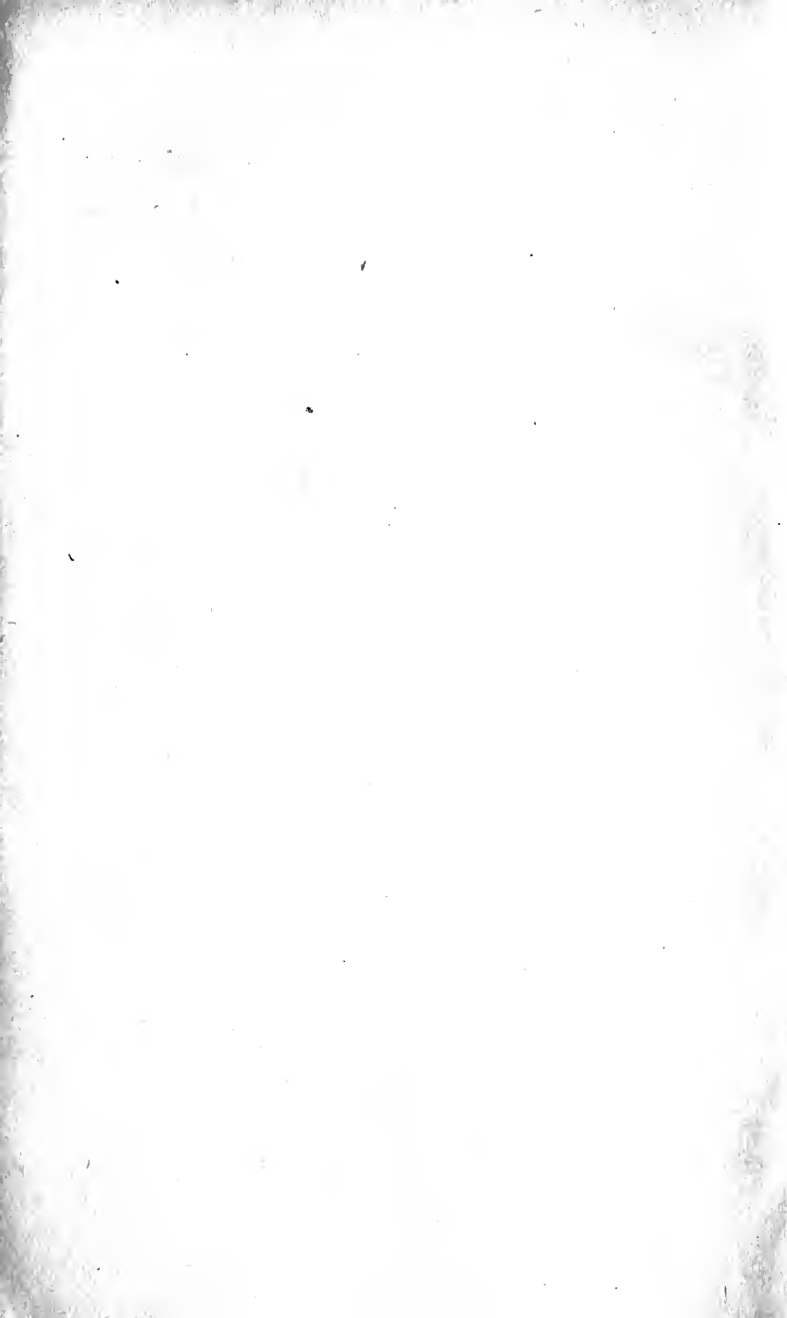


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LIVES OF  
MILTON & ADDISON  
J. WIGHT DUFF



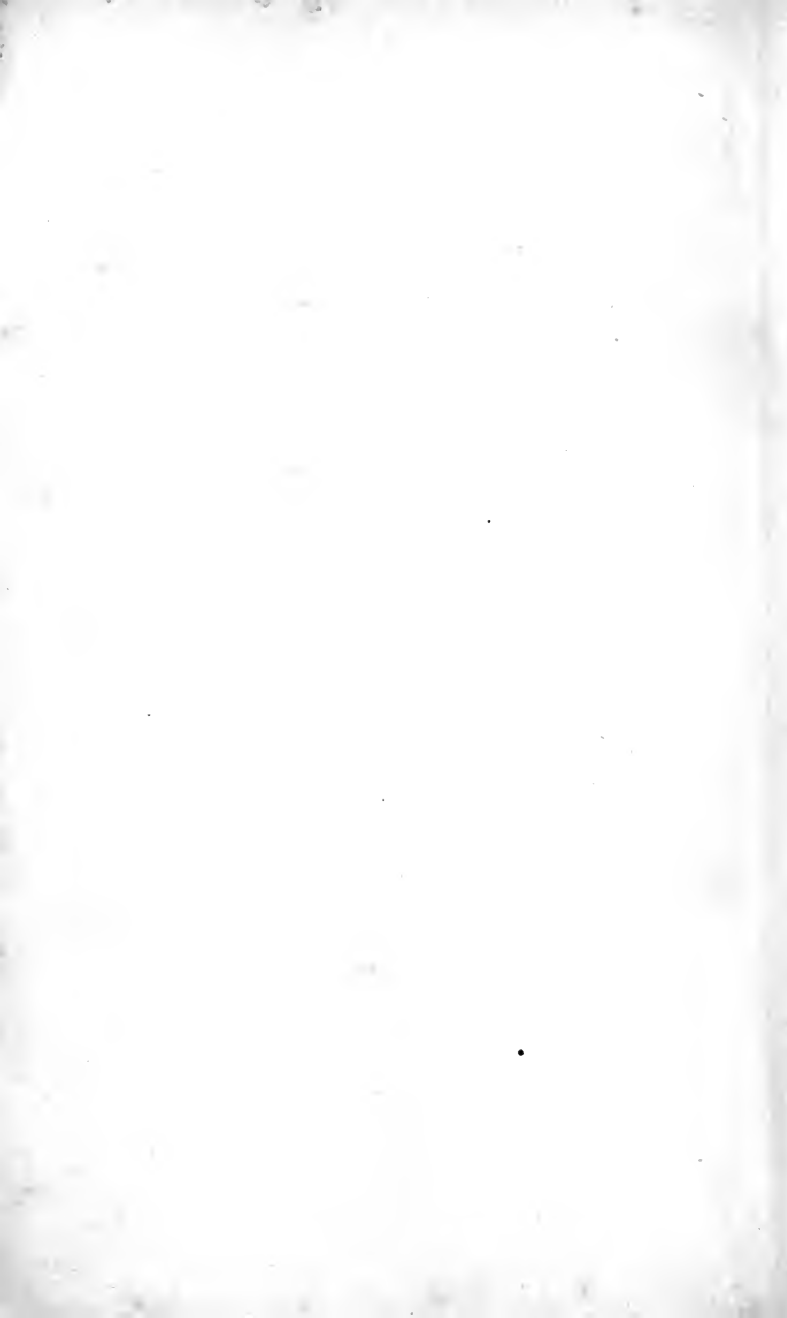


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Samuel Johnson.

*From the Painting by Reynolds  
in the National Gallery.*

JOHNSON  
11

LIVES OF MILTON AND ADDISON

BY

J. WIGHT DUFF, M.A.

LATE SCHOLAR OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD;  
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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THE text adopted in this edition of the Lives of Milton and Addison is virtually Johnson's own, modernised in spelling and punctuation. It seemed inadvisable to follow Cunningham's method of correcting in the text erroneous dates or quotations, and such corrections have been left to the notes; on the other hand, discussion of variant readings, due to Johnson's own revision, is foreign to the purpose of an edition intended for schools and colleges. Older names of places—such as *Hamburgh* (p. 4) and *Namptwich* (p. 59)—and old forms—such as *catched*, *sunk* (p. 91) for *sank*, *sung* (p. 58) for *sang*, and *succours* (p. 132) — have been retained. Where the difference is only one of spelling, a modern dress has been given to words like *musick*, *alledged*, *Restauration*, *atchieved*, *chusing*, *visiters*, *chearful*, *compleat*. Paragraphs, separate in early editions, have been in many cases united to accord with modern usage and logical connection. Three brief omissions, amounting to about four lines in all, have been made, so that the text is considerably fuller than in Matthew Arnold's edition of the 'Six Chief Lives.'

The notes aim constantly at making Johnson's own meaning clear and interesting to the student. While his more important inaccuracies of statement or quotation are pointed out, it has been borne in mind, in the Introduction and in the Notes generally, that it is of more vital moment to understand Johnson the man and Johnson the critic, than to be able to correct his slips in genealogy and chronology, or give the exact dates of Milton's Italian acquaintances Francini, Selvaggi, and Salsilli. After all, the book is the thing; and thus the notes, though necessarily numerous to the names and illustrations so abundant in Johnson, have been as far as possible condensed.

For certain of the notes I beg to acknowledge hints received from Professor Deighton's edition of the 'Milton' and Mr Ryland's edition of the 'Addison,' and from several of the works cited in the list of select books of reference. But I should especially recall the enthusiasm for Johnson awakened in me years ago by the friendship and the writings of the greatest of Johnsonian scholars, Dr G. Birkbeck Hill. To my friend and former tutor, Mr George Wood, Bursar of Pembroke College, Oxford, I tender my hearty thanks for the list of Johnson relics in Pembroke, which forms one of the Appendices to this volume.

J. W. D.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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### JOHNSON'S CHARM.

"ONE had better be palsied at eighteen than not keep company with such a man." With these words Dempster consoled Boswell when he complained that drinking port and sitting up late with Dr Johnson affected his nerves. Hundreds feel the same enthusiasm still, and sit up late to keep company with him in the graphic pages of Boswell. What, then, is the secret of Johnson's charm? Above all things it is the unique character of the man that compels attention—a personality absolutely different from all others, striking in figure and in manners, great in knowledge and literary power, commanding in conversation and argument. He was original, not in that he was a champion of new ideas, but in that he could defend old ideas in a novel manner. Thus it is Johnson the man rather than Johnson the writer that the world remembers. His sayings, his mannerisms, his very weaknesses have a way of clinging to us for good. Those who remember his determination that "the Whig dogs should not have the best of it," number far more than those who recall him as the author of 'Irene'

or even of 'London.' True, many who could not quote from his other works can quote definitions from his Dictionary; but that is because his was the most personal of all dictionaries: the man shines out in it. In the minds of most, Johnson is associated with sage deliverances, clever epigrams, penetrating definitions, and crushing retorts, rather than with his formal writing in prose or verse: as Burke said, Johnson appears far greater in Boswell's books than in his own. Many can quote his definition of *oats*, or state his views on "the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees," or mimic his dogmatic and clinching retorts opening with an impressive "Sir," who could not cite a verse from the 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' or give the barest outline to the story of 'Rasselas.'

It is "Dictionary Johnson," Johnson of the countess 'Johnsoniana,' the master of quip and *bon-mot*, whom we know best and most admire. With Macaulay, we can picture him even now, in "the brown coat with the metal buttons, and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans."<sup>1</sup> Four generations of men have passed and, thanks to Boswell, the old doctor is with us still.

For, of course, Boswell—"prince of biographers," as he is justly styled—is the one who has drawn Johnson with the most painstaking justice to his many sides. I

<sup>1</sup> The goodly proportions of Johnson's teapot may still be revered in Pembroke College, Oxford, and go so far to justify Macaulay's hyperbole. See the list of Johnsonian relics in the Appendix.

is because Johnson was so many-sided that we find something fresh in every study of him. Some, like Mrs Piozzi, have been struck with the inexhaustible store of his wit, from which we quote a score of sayings like travellers "who, having visited Delhi or Golconda, bring home each a handful of oriental pearls to evince the riches of the Great Mogul": some, like Steevens, have regarded his private bounties and acts of humanity as outshining any defects: others, like Percy, have been impressed by his powerful conversation as "an antique statue, whose every vein and muscle is distinct and bold." To Carlyle he was a truly sincere man of letters heroically positive in an age of negations, a valiant defender of truth in days of pretence and half-truth, "brave old Samuel, *ultimus Romanorum*." To Macaulay, in spite of "the anfractuosities of his intellect and of his temper," in spite too of his rampant Toryism, he was "both a great and a good man." Taine sees in him a beef-eating Saxon, an upholder of convention and English respectability and morality, endowed with manners and habits utterly impossible in a French drawing-room. Matthew Arnold, reminding us, as becomes the greatest Victorian critic, of Johnson's significance in literature, calls him "a man of letters of the first class, and the greatest power in English letters during the eighteenth century."

## JOHNSON'S LIFE.

"Lives can only be written from personal knowledge," says Johnson in his 'Life of Addison.' Once

for all, the story has been told by the immortal Boswell in a book declared by Macaulay as "likely to be read as long as the English exists either as a living or a dead language." Boswell had the indispensable "personal knowledge"; as Johnson would have said, he had "eaten and drunk" with his hero. Such a condition we cannot fulfil in the letter, but by proxy we can; and Boswell's own ample story must here be narrated in brief.

Early in the eighteenth century, in the days when there were no booksellers' shops in Birmingham, a bookseller used to come from Lichfield to open a stall there on market-days. This was Michael Johnson, whose son Samuel was born at Lichfield, September 18, 1709. The atmosphere round him from earliest years was an atmosphere of books. Once hunting for apples, supposed to be hidden on a shelf, he found a folio Petrarch instead; the apples were forgotten, but knowledge was gained. He sat down to a mental feast. It was by such methods of indiscriminate and voracious reading rather than by regular work at school in Lichfield and Stourbridge, that young Johnson laid the foundations of his wide learning. His Latin scholarship was his main qualification. When he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, on October 31, 1728, he was described by his tutor as "the best qualified for the university that he had ever known come there"; it was a surprise to find a freshman who could quote Macrobius. Very soon he made his mark by an able translation into Latin verse of Pope's 'Messiah.' Intellectually superior to



his fellows, he was only too often treated as socially inferior. His poverty was obvious. We all know the story of the pair of shoes charitably left for him, which he flung away in hot pride—only, Johnson was a commoner, not a servitor, as Carlyle has it in ‘Heroes and Hero-worship.’ The assistance which old Michael Johnson received to enable him to send Samuel to college failed to keep him there, and after a residence of fourteen months<sup>1</sup> Johnson had to leave college without waiting for a degree. But he left with a respect for Oxford which contrasts strongly with Gibbon’s contempt for the same *alma mater* a generation afterwards. Oxford made an indelible impression on Johnson; for it was Jacobite Oxford, “the home of lost causes,” as Matthew Arnold calls her in a noble passage in the ‘Essays in Criticism.’

Discontent had often prompted him to mutinous harangues among knots of undergraduates in the quadrangle at Pembroke. “It was bitterness,” he said later in life, “which they mistook for frolic.” His prospects seemed no rosier now that he had quitted college. His father died in 1731: he was not happy as a school usher: he failed in various applications: the want of a degree militated against him: he had “the character of being a very haughty, ill-natured gent.,” and it was thought his “way of distorting his face” might affect young lads. Often, too, he was the prey of a brooding melancholy. He was a strange combination of physical

<sup>1</sup> This is proved in Dr Birkbeck Hill’s ‘Dr Johnson: His Friends and Critics.’ Most of Johnson’s biographers say three years with Boswell and Macaulay.

strength and weakness. As a child, touched by Queen Anne for "the evil," he bore scrofulous scars on his face all his life.

At Birmingham, in 1733, his real literary life began with his undertaking to translate from the French a 'Voyage to Abyssinia' by the Jesuit Lobo. He earned five guineas thereby. Little response was made to his efforts to obtain literary work; it is all the more surprising that at twenty-five he should marry Mrs Porter, the widow of a Birmingham tradesman—a stout, painted, bedizened woman nearly twice his own age. Their affection was real, and the union was happy despite a curious start. The bride and bridegroom set out on horseback for Derby to be wedded: filled with notions from old romances, in a spirit as capricious as that shown by Lynette to Gareth in Tennyson's 'Idylls,' she abused her bridegroom for riding now too fast, now too slow; but he "resolved to begin as he meant to end," and pushed on briskly till out of sight, so that when at last he allowed her to overtake him, he observed the future Mrs Johnson to be in tears! The private school which he opened at Edial, near Lichfield, brought him only three pupils; true, David Garrick, the future actor, was among them, but one swallow does not make a summer. Johnson found time there to write a considerable part of his tragedy 'Irene'; it was, however, imperative to push his fortune where there were wider openings, and so in 1737 he made his way to London with Garrick. "I came with twopence halfpenny in my pocket," he remarked long after, "and thou, Davy, with three halfpence in thine." Twenty-

five years passed before Johnson was freed from the continual stings of poverty.

London was not the most inviting of places for a struggling man of letters in 1737. As Macaulay observes, "literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public." Ministers had ceased to value the political services of writers as highly as they did in Addison's day; and, on the other hand, fortunes were not to be made by writing books as in the nineteenth century. Johnson met with discouraging receptions: one publisher suggested he should get "a porter's knot," and so employ his body rather than his mind. Shabbily dressed, in miserable lodgings, and with needy associates, he contrived at first barely to support himself. "I dined very well for eightpence. . . . I had a cut of meat for sixpence, and bread for a penny, and gave the waiter a penny." Again he says, "I was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty; but I was at the same time very sorry to be poor." Personal experience lends force to his poem 'London,' based on the third satire of Juvenal, and bitterly satiric on the life of the capital which was to become so dear to Johnson. It drew Pope's attention, who remarked about the unknown author that he would "soon be *déterré*." It brought Johnson ten guineas and considerable reputation.

Soon after coming to London, Johnson had begun writing for Cave's 'Gentleman's Magazine,' and from 1740 for some years he regularly edited the parliamentary debates for that periodical under the thin

disguise of "Debates of the Senate of Lilliput." There was no attempt to report the debates *verbatim*, and Johnson's talents found play in saving appearances by putting reasonable arguments into the mouths of both parties, while invariably taking "care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it." His 'Life of Savage,' 1744, is a noble literary monument to that wretched friend, the son of an earl, who, dogged by misfortune, and wrecked by irregularity of life, had died in jail at Bristol the year before. An engrossing story, it gives us a vivid picture of the wild Bohemian life of London in the eighteenth century.

In 1745 appeared Johnson's 'Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth,' consisting partly of reflections such as those on witches and witchcraft in the time of Shakespeare, and partly of textual emendations such as the alteration—on the dangerous principle of *common-sense*—of "This castle has a pleasant seat" into "This castle hath a pleasant site." In 1747 he undertook, for fifteen hundred guineas offered him by a combination of booksellers, to bring out a 'Dictionary of the English Language': the plan he addressed to Lord Chesterfield, Secretary of State. The fee mentioned was scanty enough; for it included all payments necessary for help. His knowledge of the language had "grown up in his mind insensibly" as he himself avowed; but the task was so great that he was questioned how he could promise to accomplish his design in three years, if the French Academy with forty members took forty years to complete their dictionary. His reply was characteristic: "40 times 40 is 1600:

as 3 is to 1600, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman." Yet he was not as good as his word. Eight years of toil passed before this pillar of his fame could be set up: in 1755, the two famous folios appeared. "Thank God, I am done with him," exclaimed the publisher when the last sheets arrived. "I am glad," remarked Johnson when he heard this from his messenger, "that he thanks God for anything."

These eight years had been varied by other literary efforts. The 'Vanity of Human Wishes' in 1749, based on the tenth satire of Juvenal, is the most representative work of Johnson as a poet. A true instinct led him to adopt the fierce invective of the Roman satirist of the early empire to his own age. In virtue of his seriousness and moral indignation he is of the brotherhood of Juvenal—he is didactic and satiric. He utters no lyrical cry. It is not with Byron or Shelley that he can be compared, but with Dryden, Pope, and Goldsmith. He has not the passion for wild nature to be found in Wordsworth, nor the enchanting irregular melody of Coleridge. His interest is, like Pope's, in man: his metre is the regular couplet which descended from Waller and Denham, through Dryden, to be the orthodox verse of the eighteenth century. 'London' is more vigorous and lively than the 'Vanity of Human Wishes'; but the latter is the work of a man who has thought and felt more deeply.

The same year was brightened by Garrick's production of 'Irene' at Drury Lane. Johnson's presence among the audience, resplendent in a scarlet waistcoat, anticipated the similar garb of Théophile Gautier on the

production of Victor Hugo's 'Hernani' in 1830; only 'Hernani' meant a romantic triumph, and 'Irene,' after running nine nights, ceased to have any significance, except that it had brought to Johnson a much-needed sum of nearly £300.

Next year was marked by the publication of the 'Rambler,' a bi-weekly paper of the kind made popular by Steele's 'Tatler' and Addison's 'Spectator.' From March 1750 until March 1752 these essays on ethical, social, and literary topics had considerable vogue. The matter was solid and the style dignified—sometimes to the verge of pomposity. The papers came to an end about the same date as his wife died; and Johnson's sorrow and loneliness were proportioned to that curious devotion which he had shown her. For three years more he worked resolutely to finish his Dictionary, his main distraction being his contributions to the 'Adventurer' in 1753.

His university in 1755 conferred the degree of M.A. on him. He had kept back the publication of his Dictionary to permit the insertion of a title of which he was so proud that when in Oxford he wore his gown "almost ostentatiously." On the eve of the issue of the Dictionary, Chesterfield, who had done nothing to encourage Johnson during years of toil, praised the coming work in the 'World,' from a wish to receive the compliment of the Dedication. Johnson should be, Chesterfield suggested, a dictator in matters of language; but he was not to be so cheaply won. In a cold, stinging, independent letter<sup>1</sup>—one of his very best productions in prose—he

<sup>1</sup> The letter is quoted in the Appendix.

tells Chesterfield what he thinks of his patronage: "Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?"

Never was a dictionary so distinctly a contribution to literature. We quote it as we quote an author. We forget how ludicrously weak it is in philology. It took hold of the lexicographer's own generation, and called forth volumes of comment, as the Catalogue of the British Museum Library can prove. No wonder that in America itself "the beauties and quaint conceits of Johnson's Dictionary" should form the subject of a separate book.<sup>1</sup> And how witty and pithy the definitions are—chapters from Johnson's life written in small: *Lexicographer*, "a harmless drudge"; *patron*, "a wretch who supports with insolence and is paid with flattery"; *pension*, "pay given to a State hireling for treason to his country"; *Tory*, "one who adheres to the ancient constitution of the State and the apostolical hierarchy of the Church of England"; *Whig*, "the name of a faction"; *Excise*, "a hateful tax levied upon commodities." *To transpire* is "to escape from secrecy to notice; a sense lately innovated from France, without necessity": Johnson condemns the word because it was first used by Lord Bolingbroke, who had left the Jacobites. In a similar spirit, because Lord Gower forsook the Jacobite interest, he proposed to illustrate *renegado* by the boldly personal remark, "sometimes we say a Gower." What he could

<sup>1</sup> Leisure Moments in Gough Square; or, The Beauties and Quaint Conceits of Johnson's Dictionary. By G. A. Stringer. Buffalo, N.Y., 1886.

do in the way of pedantic Johnsonese is seen in the stock instance—*network*, “anything reticulated or decussated at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections.”

From 1758 to 1760 he resumed periodical writing by contributing to the ‘Universal Chronicle’ the papers known as the ‘Idler.’ Written in rather a lighter vein than the ‘Rambler,’ these papers are yet sufficiently heavy; for is it not ponderous wit in Molly Quick, the lady’s maid, to complain of her mistress that “she always gives her directions obliquely and allusively by the mention of something relative or consequential”? Is it not Johnsonese for “she cannot give a straight order”? Nowadays, in good truth, one can only ramble through the ‘Rambler’ and idle through the ‘Idler.’ They do not hold us as Addison can. Miss Maypole, who makes her mother look old before her time; Suspirius, the human screech-owl and type of the eternal grumbler; Hymenæus, with his various courtships in the ‘Rambler’; Ned Scamper, Jack Scatter, and the other inmates of the Fleet Prison in the ‘Adventurer’; Betty Broom, the servant, and Dick Minim, the critic, in the ‘Idler,’ do not live so really for us as the members of the Spectator Club.

The death of Johnson’s mother in 1759 called forth ‘Rasselas.’ He wrote it in a week to defray the expenses of her funeral. This professing story of an Abyssinian prince is merely an account of his vain pursuit of happiness: it is ‘The Vanity of Human Wishes’ in prose; and Johnson’s Abyssinians reason like Western Europeans. The want of genuine oriental



colour, however, must not lead us to misjudge 'Rasselas.' It is excellent prose in Johnson's best manner, and during his lifetime was translated into Italian, French, German, and Dutch.

His long struggle with poverty ended in 1762, when Johnson, after a little hesitation, accepted a pension of £300 from the Crown. He had no intention of becoming the "State hireling" of his own definition; but he felt his scruples lessened as a Tory Ministry was in power, and as he was assured by Lord Bute that the pension was not given him for anything he was to do, but for what he had done. All the same, Jacobite though he was, Johnson felt henceforth that he could not decently drink King James's health in the money which King George gave him.

If the pension hindered his Jacobite toasts, it hindered his power of work still more. Constitutionally indolent, Johnson had now no incentive to toil. But if he wrote little, he talked much; and now opens his great conversational period. "The good I can do by my conversation," he remarked, "bears the same proportion to the good I can do by my writings that the practice of a physician retired to a small town does to his practice in a great city." The chief theatre of this modified activity was the *Literary Club*, instituted by him and Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1764; and its details are preserved by Boswell, who met Johnson first in the preceding year. Johnson was then a man of fifty-three: Boswell was a young Scottish lawyer of twenty-two. One way of gauging the greatness of Johnson is to realise the composition of the club over which he reigned. It included

men in the forefront of literary or artistic life—Reynolds the painter, Garrick the actor, Burke the orator, Gibbon the historian, Goldsmith the poet, Jones the orientalist. Burke himself played second to Johnson in the Club; for Johnson was pre-eminently in his element there. “A tavern chair,” he maintained, “is the throne of human felicity.” There he loved to fold his legs and “have out his talk.” “I dogmatise and contradict, and in the conflict of opinion and sentiments I find delight.” His secret lay in his habitual endeavour to speak his best on all occasions, without permitting careless expressions to escape him. The result was that constantly polished diction which drew from a young lady the exclamation, “How he does talk! every sentence is an essay.” In the best sense, Johnson talked like a book. His knowledge and his advice lay open to all: he was an oracle easily consulted. But he did not readily brook contradiction, and woe betide the opponent who faltered. Sometimes he could applaud a good answer with “Very well said, sir”; or, “Speak no more; rest your colloquial fame on this”; but far oftener it was “Sir, you don’t see your way through that question”; “Sir, you talk the language of ignorance”; “Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig”; or, “Dearest, you are a dunce.” How was it possible to stand against such superb egoism? On such occasions Johnson’s enjoyment was keenest. “Well,” said Johnson one morning, “we had good talk last night.” “Yes, sir,” replied Boswell inimitably, “you tossed and gored several persons.” The victims sometimes deserved their goring: let us hope that it always did them good.

Another scene where the same brilliant conversation could be heard was the table of Mr Thrale, a wealthy brewer, whose wife's cleverness and vivacity had a great attraction for Johnson. The Thrales' house at Streatham was a second home for him during sixteen years of his life. His own home was tenanted by what Macaulay terms a "strange menagerie," which did credit to Johnson's tenderness of heart—the peevish and blind Miss Williams; Mrs Desmoulins and her daughter; a Miss Carmichael, who equalled them in poverty; Mr Levett, a miserable practitioner of physic; and Frank, the black servant.

His long-delayed edition of Shakespeare appeared in 1765. Although it had been subscribed for nine years before, his lethargy, albeit struggled and prayed against, had gained on him so greatly that only a bitter impeachment of his honesty from the Whig satirist Churchill could rouse him to fulfil his obligation. The best feature of Johnson's Shakespeare is the Preface: its weakness as an edition is due to his astonishingly small acquaintance with the Elizabethan dramatists. The greatness of the last twenty years of his life rests on only one work in addition to his conversation, and that is the 'Lives of the Poets.' For Johnson would bulk as largely in the mind if he had never written either his political pamphlets, culminating in his anti-American 'Taxation no Tyranny,' or even his 'Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland,' interesting record though it be of his tour in Scotland and the Hebrides with Boswell in 1773.

It is a life which closes in gloom. Death had invaded his own house and the ranks of his friends. After

Thrale died, his wife had married an Italian music-master Piozzi, and Streatham was closed to Johnson for ever. An attack of paralysis in 1783 had been followed by asthma and dropsy; and in 1784 an ineffectual attempt was made to have his pension doubled so that he might winter abroad. Surgeons and friends like Miss Burney and Bennet Langton paid him all attention possible; but the end came on December 13, 1784, and Westminster Abbey received another of the mighty dead.

#### JOHNSON THE MAN.

Johnson's unique personality is exceedingly difficult to characterise briefly. His nature was so fully and broadly human and humane, that we feel interested in all his likes and dislikes, in all his qualities amiable and unamiable. We know him as a man better than any other figure in literature. The outward man, his apparel, his face, his gesticulations, are familiar to us; the inner man no less so. His recurrent melancholy is forgotten in his practical view of affairs, his dread of death in his brave outlook upon life, and his brusque manner in his chivalrous attention to the fair sex. There is no mistaking the kindly disposition of a man who will help a gentlewoman "somewhat in liquor" to cross the street, or carry a wretched outcast, overtaken by illness, at night on that broad back of his to his home to be tended. His own sufferings had given him a heart to feel for distress, and only at times did his robust frame render him incapable of full sympathy, as when he scolded Boswell for shivering, or silenced his fellow-traveller in a post-chaise

who complained of headache, by telling him, "At your age, sir, I had no headache." With great unconscious humour he once remarked, "I look upon myself as a good-humoured fellow." It was too much for Boswell : he could not regard the great lexicographer as if he had been "Sam Johnson, a mere pleasant companion" ; and he protested, "No, no, sir, that will not do : you are good - natured, but not good - humoured : you are irascible : you have not patience with folly and absurdity." In this connection Goldsmith's saying is the happiest of all, "He has nothing of the bear but his skin." Johnson commands our affection as he did that of his companions who looked up to him as a master, and were content to frequent the Club and receive their drubbing if occasion offered. He commands our respect for his sturdy rejection of many prejudices, for a manly independence which in a time of convention anticipated a later age, for his fearless declaration of all the beliefs that were in him. He commands our deference to his practical advice because an observant eye, experience of men, and varied fortunes had made him a good judge of human nature and a close reasoner on human life. But it is greatest in him that he enlists our affection ; and most men, as they come to know Johnson, share Boswell's feeling, "I could defend him at the point of my sword."

#### LIKES AND DISLIKES.

To fill in one's picture of Johnson one naturally recalls his strongest partialities and prejudices. Half-a-

dozen sentences from Boswell set the man before us. "Dear Bathurst was a man to my very heart's content. He hated a fool, and he hated a Whig. He was a very good hater." Driving rapidly in a post-chaise, he remarked once to Boswell, "Life has not many things better than this"; yet it depended on the company and the talk; for he said on another occasion, "If I had no duties and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman; but she should be one that could understand me and add something to the conversation." He was truly social. With his broad sympathies he could say, "I love the young dogs of this age"; or, "Sir, it is a great thing to dine with the Canons of Christ Church," or, as he tells Boswell elsewhere, "with a duke"; or again, "Madam, I am very fond of the company of ladies: I like their beauty: I like their delicacy: I like their vivacity: and I like their silence!" He was a man, then, with a natural liking for his fellows, for the scholarly Bennet Langton, for the fashionable Topham Beauclerk, for "clubable" men; he felt respect for the great and pity for the poor. He had a relish for good eating, indeed a fierce appetite that riveted his looks to his plate till it was sated, and the time came for talk: he could break himself off the habit of wine-drinking; he could charitably judge those with less self-control. We half understand his position in poetry and criticism when we remember that the beauties of nature to him as to Boswell were "not equal to Fleet Street." "No wise man will go to live in the country. . . . A great city is the school for

studying life"; for him the full tide of human existence was at Charing Cross, and the town was his element.

Johnson is the apostle, too, of established conventions and institutions, the champion of King and Church and Lords, and the fixed structure of Society. Revolutionary programmes and unsettling views were to him things abhorred. A believer in the divinity that "doth hedge a king," he regarded Charles II. and James II. as among the best of monarchs; captured by old feudal notions, he admired the position of the Scottish laird. He was on the side of order, an uncompromising foe to anarchy.

His antipathies are no less interesting. He is a type of the insular Englishman: his one trip abroad was to France with the Thrales. He dislikes Americans: "Sir, they are a race of convicts"; and the French: "France is worse than Scotland in everything but climate," which might seem little compliment to France, judged by the views of Scotland usually credited to him. But his jocular utterances have been taken too seriously. Johnson owned, "I sometimes say more than I mean—in jest." He never could resist the chance of satire; and he teased Boswell because he liked him. As Percy said, his invectives were "more in pleasantry and sport than real and malignant." It is obvious also, though often forgotten, that Scotland and Scotsmen stood higher in his esteem after his Scottish tour. "Tell them," he writes to Boswell in 1775, "how well I speak of Scotch politeness and Scotch hospitality and Scotch beauty, and of everything Scotch but Scotch oatcakes and Scotch prejudices." It was all the surface play of wit; for he answers Boswell's timid invitation to meet a compatriot;

"Mr Johnson does not see why Mr Boswell should suppose a Scotchman less acceptable than any other man. He will be at the Mitre." Compromise therefore with Scots there might be, but with political adversaries none: "The first Whig was the Devil," "Whiggism is a negation of all principle." Dissenters, deists, every one unorthodox, were equally anathema. Yet a manly defence of most positions would have extorted respect from him: "I hate a fellow whom pride or cowardice or laziness drives into a corner, and who does nothing but sit and growl. Let him come out as I do and bark." Trivialities, like puns and chatter about the weather, he detested, but good talk might always win him.

#### JOHNSON'S STYLE.

Here, if anywhere in all literature, the style is the man—learned, copious, forcible, dignified, frequently ponderous. It is a style always impressive by reason of its vigour, sometimes odd in its mannerisms as its author was in his gesticulations and convulsions.

In discussing Johnson's style it is well to remember that it underwent a process of development. He himself laid little store by early work like his translation from Lobo; hearing part of 'Irene' read aloud long after it was acted, he exclaimed, "I thought it had been better"; and reading one of his 'Rambles' later in life, he pronounced it "too wordy." Even in his own day his English prose was felt to be overloaded with Latin diction. In 1767 there appeared 'Lexiphanes,' a Lucianesque dialogue intended to "expose the hard



words of our English Lexiphanes, the Rambler." On the whole, the common view is right that Johnson is inordinately fond of Latinisms in choice of words and use of inversions. 'Rasselas,' for example, is a contrast to the simpler style of Fielding's 'Tom Jones.' Johnson in fact derives ultimately from 'Les Précieuses' the notion that the avoidance of the ordinary is the essence of style; and so the colossal lexicographer, like a Cyclops of literature, hurls at us those sesquipedalian terms which he has brought home from his adventures in the world of words. Even his talk was not entirely free from pedantry. Collecting himself to give a heavy stroke to Gay's 'Beggar's Opera,' he said: "There is in it such a labefactation of all principle as may be injurious to morality"; and not content with his pithy remark on the 'Rehearsal,' "It has not wit enough to keep it sweet," he paraphrased it *ore rotundo* and *suo more*, "It has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction." Little wonder if Goldsmith thought that in fable-writing Johnson would make his "little fishes talk like whales."

Time lightened his style of much of its load. Between the 'Rambler' and the 'Lives of the Poets' intervened a quarter of a century of club-talk which left his diction distinctly freer and easier.<sup>1</sup> It is not so much that there is a decrease in the use of Latin words as that the build of the sentence is lighter. There are more short sentences, fewer inversions, less inclination

<sup>1</sup> "In his talk were no pompous triads and little more than a fair proportion of words in *osity* and *ation*."—Macaulay, 'Samuel Johnson.'

to the periodic structure. Read an essay in the 'Rambler' and half a chapter of Gibbon; then turn to the 'Lives of the Poets,' and the style will at once strike one as less heavy. In point of fact, Macaulay has not much smaller a percentage of Latin words than Johnson has, and Johnson has decidedly a smaller percentage than Gibbon.<sup>1</sup> In *vocabulary*,<sup>2</sup> Johnson is, as we should expect, rich and copious. The Lives prove his command of homely as well as learned diction; though simplicity is occasionally marred by "Johnsonese," such as "conclude the register" for *ending a list*, or "licentiously paraphrastical" for *free*. It is inevitable also, owing to the march of the language, that readers should nowadays detect a certain quaintness, a spice of archaism in his language, to be noted sometimes in a single word, sometimes in the general turn of expression—as when he speaks in the 'Milton' of a life written with minute "inquiry," or of a man having "more than common literature," or of the "composure" of 'Paradise Lost,' or of King being "much a favourite at Cambridge." In *the sentence*, the outstanding feature is Johnson's employment of balance: instances will be readily found in the 'Milton' and 'Addison,' *e.g.*, "Fruition left them nothing to ask, and Innocence left them nothing to fear." In the Lives the value to be gained by departing from more complicated sentences is

<sup>1</sup> For statistics see Emerson's 'Brief History of the English Language,' p. 119; and Mr Ryland's edition of Johnson's 'Milton,' Introd., p. xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> The constituent elements of Johnson's style are treated methodically in the late Professor Minto's 'Manual of English Prose' (ed. 1881, pp. 414-424).

fully realised: and the short sentence is handled with vigorous and sometimes abrupt effect: "Which side he took I know not: his descendant inherited no veneration for the White Rose" (p. 3). It would be difficult to miss the effect of a short explanatory sentence suspended with admirable skill to the close of the paragraph—"The family of the lady were cavaliers" (p. 19). Johnson's own arrangement of *paragraphs* is not so masterly as Macaulay's, for he frequently separates paragraphs which would be more logically combined.<sup>1</sup>

For so learned a writer, Johnson employs surprisingly few similes: he is not *ornate* in the rhetorical sense, though his style has an independent wealth that comes of his full rounded diction. Nor has he the ear to produce prose with the melody and rhythm of Sir Thomas Browne's 'Urn-burial' or Milton's 'Areopagitica'; yet by both writers he was influenced, and especially by Browne, whose works he had edited in his period of hack-work.

Turning from "elements" of style to "qualities," one asks if Johnson's style is marked by simplicity, clearness, strength. His love of the abstract and of general reflections, coupled with his tendency to inflated diction, prevents his style from appealing to popular taste: it is because he has to deal with the individual case and the concrete example that the Lives attract where the 'Rambler' repels. But though he is not a *simple* writer, he is *clear* in virtue of his emphasis and choice of appropriate words. The impression of *strength* left by Johnson's prose is secured, it ought to be noted, with-

<sup>1</sup> In this edition Johnson's arrangement of paragraphs has not been strictly adhered to.

out passion. It is a prose which has few rivals for cool and dignified force.

### JOHNSON'S CRITICISM.

To understand Johnson's attitude one must understand his age. Our "indispensable eighteenth-century literature," as Mr Gosse<sup>1</sup> calls it, was Augustan in type. Its critical ideals were *classic* rather than *romantic*: in other words, the conventional was preferred to novel methods of creating beauty. Poets were expected to follow the approved models in both matter and manner—to treat subjects that would interest polished society, and to adopt the clear-cut form of Pope's heroic couplet. In the main the age was out of sympathy with novelties like Thomson's 'Winter' of 1726, which heralded a "return to nature" in its descriptions, and departed from conventional form in its blank verse; or like his revival of the Spenserian stanza in his 'Castle of Indolence.' Only gradually after 1765, when Percy published his 'Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,' did men of taste feel drawn to the simpler poetry of the ballad; and only gradually did the stock metre of the eighteenth century yield to the freer but equally artistic melodies which have been since elaborated in the nineteenth century by Coleridge, Keats, Tennyson, and Swinburne. As an epoch of "common-sense," the age of Johnson was pre-eminently an age of prose; and "regularity, uniformity, precision, and balance,"<sup>2</sup> the virtues of good

<sup>1</sup> History of Eighteenth-Century Literature, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Arnold, Preface to 'Six Chief Lives of the Poets.'

prose, were also admired in poetry, and influenced the reception of every poem.

It was also a period of criticism; and we need these periods in literature, when bombast and extravagance are repressed, and restraint and good sense encouraged. As it is at least an arguable position that critical eras pave the way for creative eras, we may owe not a little of what is best in the nineteenth century to Dr Johnson and his times.

Johnson's method of criticism was judicial. Authors and their works are, as it were, summoned before him, tried, acquitted on certain counts, but hopelessly condemned on other parts of the indictment. "The defects and faults of 'Paradise Lost,' for faults and defects every work of man must have, it is the business of impartial criticism to discover"<sup>1</sup>—one could not have a clearer statement of his method. Modern criticism, on the other hand, from Lessing to Sainte-Beuve, has been historical and sympathetic: it has sought to place the reader at the author's standpoint, by explaining his environment, his view of the world, his success in creating new forms of beauty. It leads to the reasonable attitude of admiration, so signally illustrated by the late Mr Pater in his 'Studies in the Renaissance' and 'Appreciations.' What the critic should make clear is the unique pleasure given by any work of art. As Mr Arthur Symonds has pointed out in his 'Studies in Two Literatures,' the fruitful principles in criticism are those of Goethe, "who held

<sup>1</sup> The judicial function of criticism, according to Johnson's conception, is clearly declared in the allegory of Criticism and her Torch in the 'Rambler,' No. 3.

that what it concerns us to know about a work or a writer are the merits, not the defects, of the writer and the book." The old theory survived in Edgar Allan Poe's declaration that the critic's "legitimate task is still in pointing out and analysing defects, and showing how the work might have been improved, to aid the cause of letters." As Mr Symons pertinently asks, "Is it necessary to say that one dislikes a thing?"

What are the tests which Johnson applies? The three principal tests have been excellently termed edification, correctness, and common-sense.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Johnson, in criticising a work, asks—(1) What does it teach? (2) Does it obey the rules of art? (3) Does it appear sensible to the ordinary thinking man? These tests in their application frequently lead Johnson astray. The first accounts for his reckoning among Shakespeare's faults<sup>2</sup> that "he seems to write without any moral purpose," as if such moral as we need draw from 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'Othello,' and 'Lear' were not written in the heart of any spectator who can feel! The dramatist need not, like Æsop, close his every piece with *Hæc fabula docet*. The second prejudices him against forms to which he is unused, against sonnets, ballads, and the less regular metres. The third, the canon of common-sense, is so powerful as to seriously check his own imagination, and fatally hamper his appreciation of some of the greatest poetry. His practical views made him a trustworthy oracle on questions of life and conduct,

<sup>1</sup> Mr Ryland's Introduction to Johnson's 'Life of Milton,' p. xix.

<sup>2</sup> Works of Samuel Johnson, ed. Murphy, 1810, vol. ii. p. 146.

but would have totally unfitted him for sympathy with much in Shelley and Keats. Of Keats' line—

“There is a budding morrow in midnight,”

we can readily imagine with Mr William Watson<sup>1</sup> that he would have declared, “Why, sir, the man might as well have said, ‘There is a blossoming gooseberry bush in midwinter.’”

His criticism, with all its drawbacks, has great value. It has the historical value of representing the views of the eighteenth century at their best. It has the merit of setting up a high standard of art, for it will tolerate no slipshod workmanship. It has the merit of tolerating no violations of reason, and compelling thought. It is independent and fearless, judging each author on his own merits. It is pronounced, and leaves no doubt as to the critic's whereabouts. This has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. In adverse criticism Johnson is a giant who lays about him with a club—there are knockdown blows, but few rapier-thrusts. Few reviewers could show less consideration for the feelings of the reviewed: few now would dismiss their victim as Johnson did Soame Jenyns by propounding the question, *Why he that hath nothing to write should desire to be a writer!* But then emphatic statement is a virtue; even when wrong it is refreshing. Johnson's criticism is never colourless, and it betrays no unmanly hesitation.

<sup>1</sup> Mr William Watson, in his ‘Excursions in Criticism,’ has a witty paper entitled “Dr Johnson on Modern Poetry” (‘An Interview in the Elysian Fields,’ A.D. 1900).

## JOHNSON'S ATTITUDE TO SHAKESPEARE.

We may feel amused at first when with portentous gravity the critic sits on his judgment-seat and tries Shakespeare. But ere long we discover that even this imperfect method yields great results in the hands of a genius like Johnson. Shakespeare is the wild "forest" in his eyes contrasted with the "garden" of the correct and regular writer: could the contrast be better expressed? And can we really call Johnson a narrow critic if he judges by his knowledge of human nature? To him Shakespeare's great merit lies in being the poet of nature, a mirror of manners and life so true that his Romans are felt to be men. To Voltaire's expressed surprise that Shakespeare's extravagance could be endured by a nation which had seen 'Cato,' Johnson answered, "Addison speaks the language of poets, and Shakespeare of men," and he expands this by giving the palm to 'Othello' as a work of genius far truer to human nature than 'Cato' was. There is too much heard of Johnson's narrowness in criticism. It is not narrow criticism to defend, as he does, Shakespeare's mixing of comic and tragic scenes; which, by the way, was an offence in the eyes of Milton. It is not narrow criticism to defend Shakespeare against charges of violating "the unities," and to protest against the too great veneration accorded to the Unities of Place and Time on the authority of Corneille. Here "common-sense" leads the revolt against authority, and Johnson is on the side of freedom.

Johnson, to sum up, was a critic of insight rather than foresight. His gift was understanding rather than



imagination. To take an example, outside literature—he had no prevision of the importance of Anthropology; for to a gentleman desirous of studying the habits of New Zealanders, he remarked, “What could you learn, sir? what can savages tell you but what they themselves have seen?” The same strictly limited horizon confines his views in literature: he has no conception of the coming romantic spirit, and yet there were signs of it in his lifetime; and already, before his death, there had been born Wordsworth and Coleridge, who were to introduce a new era and compel new methods of criticism. But a limited horizon and strong convictions, though liable to bias, do not render his work valueless. He is so broadly and truly human that there must always remain much that is suggestive in Johnson’s criticisms even when we dissent from them. We respect the judge, even if we appeal against his sentences.

#### JOHNSON’S ATTITUDE TO MILTON AS A MAN.

To Milton as a man Johnson’s attitude is in the main unfavourable, and often grossly unfair. The opening note of royalist sympathy is struck in the remark that Milton’s brother Christopher “adhered, as the law taught him, to the King’s party.” It is particularly Milton’s religion and politics which incense Johnson. Geneva, he remarks sarcastically, “he probably considered as the metropolis of orthodoxy”; but Johnson as a High Churchman knows better. Next, he makes merry over “great promises and small performance,” because Milton gave over foreign travel

when his countrymen were contending for liberty at home, and then settled down to "vapour away his patriotism in a boarding-school." There is no recognition here of Milton's defence, with the pen, of principles which the Parliamentarians were maintaining with the sword. No part of Johnson's 'Milton' is more vehemently attacked in Blackburne's 'Remarks' (1780), as illustrating Johnson's "mean flings and malevolent surmises on Milton's most indifferent actions." Johnson is entitled to doubt the reported progress in classics made by Milton's pupils; but he might have spared us his sneer at "this wonder-working academy."

Touching on the quarrel between Milton and the Presbyterians after his views on divorce were published, Johnson utters the severe pronouncement—"He that changes his party by his humour is not more virtuous than he that changes it by his interest." Such description of sinister motives more than anything else proves Johnson's bias. For Milton as a controversialist—or as Johnson would put it, a "controvertist"—it is impossible to feel much enthusiasm: he probably deserves the worst that Johnson can say of him on this score. Partly, no doubt, his times were responsible for his rough humour, gross personalities, bad arguments, and cumbrous prose.

But Milton's employment as Latin Secretary under Cromwell stirs Johnson's hottest anger. To him Cromwell is a usurper, and Milton a slave. Ever eager to find the Puritans and Commonwealth men in fault, he cannot believe that Milton felt a sincere admiration for Cromwell. His Latin eulogy is spoiled for him by

"the grossness of his flattery." What would Johnson have thought of Cromwell as one of Carlyle's heroes? On the story that Milton declined to continue as Latin Secretary after the Restoration, explaining, "my wish is to live and die an honest man," Johnson bitterly remarks that "he that had shared authority either with the parliament or Cromwell, might have forborne to talk very loudly of his honesty."

Admitting that Milton refrained from disturbing the settlement of 1660 with his opinions, he handles him severely for his reference in 'Paradise Lost,' Bk. vii., *to evil days and evil tongues with darkness and with danger compassed round*. In stinging words, Johnson declares Milton's blindness to have been deserved, because he had used his eyes for the Commonwealth; his mention of danger "ungrateful and unjust"; his "evil days," only the times when "regicides" could no longer boast their "wickedness"; and his talk of "evil tongues," supreme "impudence." Milton's political notions he finally dismisses as "those of an acrimonious and surly republican," and his republicanism he accounts for by "an envious hatred of greatness."<sup>1</sup>

Still, there are favourable traits in the picture. Johnson admired Milton's piety, as shown in his prayer for inspiration. Commenting on the absence of prayers in Milton's household, he says very finely, "his studies and

<sup>1</sup> Blackburne in his pamphlet of 1780 laments the absence in the 'Milton' of the charitable judgments expressed in Johnson's 'Dryden': "Inquiries into the heart are not for man;" and, "A comprehensive is likewise an elevated soul, and whoever is wise is likewise honest."

meditations were an habitual prayer." He commends, too, his teaching of religion in his academy. With an evidently sincere respect for Milton's scholarship, he endorses the judgment that Milton was "the first Englishman who after the revival of letters wrote Latin verses with classic elegance." And withal Milton is a "great man" in Johnson's eyes—a great man, whose biographers paid him unconscious reverence by scrupulously mentioning every house in which he resided.

Of Johnson's attitude to Milton, as a critic, there is little to record; for Milton was no professional critic. Johnson mentions with interest Milton's chief classical favourites as Homer, Ovid, and Euripides, and among English poets Spenser, Shakespeare, and Cowley. He condemns Milton's dislike of rhymed verse, differs from him on the pronunciation of Latin, but declares that his skill in writing Latin placed Milton in the "first rank of writers and critics."

#### JOHNSON'S ATTITUDE TO MILTON AS A POET.

It is in criticising the shorter poems that Johnson is most out of sympathy with Milton. Johnson does not miss their unique quality; he feels they have a "cast original and unborrowed"; he even feels this is evidence of genius; but having gone so far along the right road, he turns back to urge that "their peculiarity is not excellence: if they differ from verses of others, they differ for the worse." Rooted in his mind is the conviction that Milton, like himself, "never learned the art of doing little things with grace": and this stubborn

belief, coupled with an inability to appreciate Milton's melody, produces his astounding verdicts on 'Lycidas' and the 'Sonnets.'

Nowhere has a great critic erred more glaringly than Johnson in his judgment of 'Lycidas.' It is one of the standing marvels of the history of criticism: "The diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing;" and again: "There is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new." The thoroughgoing advocate of "common-sense" declines to permit the pastoral fiction—

"We drove a-field, and both together heard  
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night."

Its beauty is as nothing to him. "Does it keep to the facts?" he seems to inquire. "We know that they never drove a-field, and that they had no flocks to batten." Carried to its logical conclusion, how much of the best poetry in the world would such criticism leave us! The "grosser fault" of "irreverend combinations" is inherent in the romantic conception of the poem, which did not appeal to Johnson; and the equivocation which he denounces as indecent is no more open to attack than "the Good Shepherd" of St John's Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, we hear the terms of dismissal: "Surely no

<sup>1</sup> Contrast Ruskin's attitude in 'Sesame and Lilies,' where he studies some twenty lines, beginning—

"Last came, and last did go,  
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake."

Professor Masson, in his edition of 'Milton's Poetical Works,' has an elaborate defence of 'Lycidas,' vol. i. pp. 196-201.

man could have fancied that he read 'Lycidas' with pleasure had he not known its author." The admirably sane words of Warton rise to the mind in relief—"In 'Lycidas' there is perhaps more poetry than sorrow. But let us read it for its poetry." That is the true standpoint—"let us read it for its poetry," if we have the requisite ear and taste, and we shall find 'Lycidas' holds its own exalted place among elegiac poems beside Shelley's 'Adonais,' and Tennyson's 'In Memoriam,' and Arnold's 'Thyrsis.'<sup>1</sup>

For 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' Johnson has warmer feelings. "Every man that reads them, reads them with pleasure." Yet a sarcastic tone rings in his sketch of the pensive man who on a morning "gloomy with rain and wind walks into the dark trackless woods, falls asleep by some murmuring water, and with melancholy enthusiasm expects some dream of prognostication or some music played by aerial performers." This passage called forth from Warton the indignant protest, "Never were fine imagery and fine imagination so marred, mutilated, and impoverished by a cold, unfeeling, and imperfect representation; to say nothing that Johnson confounds two descriptions." Let us, however, remember that Johnson in the end declares "they are two noble efforts of imagination."

For 'Comus,' also, Johnson feels a genuine though tempered admiration. He discovers in this, the greatest of Milton's early poems, the dawn of 'Paradise Lost.' "A work more truly poetical is rarely found," he says.

<sup>1</sup> Let us not consider ourselves literary Pharisees, if we thank our stars that in this respect we are not as the eighteenth century was!

From Johnson this is high praise: he is not the critic to let himself go in his eulogies, and he duly points out the dramatic weakness of the masque, waxes ironic in describing the action, and shows that he only half appreciates the songs.

They are "harsh in their diction, and not very musical in their numbers." It will test excellently whether one has an ear for Milton's music or is deaf to it with Johnson, if one reads the songs, which begin "Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph," "Sabrina fair," and "By the rushy fringed bank."

Two reasons prevented Johnson from valuing the Sonnets at their true worth. One was his firm belief, already mentioned, that the author of the great epic could not do little things with grace, or as he said to Hannah More, "Milton, madam, was a genius that could cut a Colossus from a rock, but could not carve heads upon cherry-stones." The other was the inability of the eighteenth century to produce or appreciate sonnets. Johnson, indeed, says dogmatically, "The fabric of a sonnet, however adapted to the Italian language, has never succeeded in ours." This is to ignore not only Shakespeare's century and a half of sonnets, and those who, like him and like Sidney in 'Astrophel and Stella,' departed from the strict Petrarchan model, but also such Elizabethans as followed Surrey and Wyatt in many of their sonnets by keeping close to the Italian model. Johnson's criticism affords small ground for believing that he would have liked the best sonnets of this century — of Wordsworth, Mrs Browning, and Rossetti. Of the best of Milton's

twenty-three sonnets, Johnson says "they are not bad," truly a "slender commendation"; and he prefers the eighth, "When the Assault was Intended," and the twenty-first, "To Cyriac Skinner." He overlooks the infinitely preferable lines 'On the Late Massacre in Piedmont' ("Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered Saints"), 'On His Blindness,' and 'On His Deceased Wife' ("Methought I saw my late espoused Saint"), which Johnson ruthlessly declares "a poor sonnet." The right estimate of Milton is that he is our only good sonneteer between the Elizabethan period and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The chief defect of 'Paradise Regained' is, as Johnson says, "dialogue without action": no doubt he would have given it fuller notice had he not discussed 'Paradise Lost' at such length. 'Samson Agonistes' is also scantily treated. He had already criticised it in the 'Rambler' (Nos. 139 and 140) as "the tragedy which ignorance has admired and bigotry applauded." His attitude is one of many proofs that Johnson was not Greek but Roman in his literary sympathies. "Long prejudice" and the "bigotry of learning" are not fair summaries of the reasons which prompted Milton to take Greek tragedy as his model. Critics do not ascribe such motives to Shelley for writing 'Prometheus Unbound,' to Matthew Arnold for 'Merope,' or to Mr Swinburne for 'Atalanta in Calydon.'

It is marvellously refreshing to appeal from the Johnson who misunderstood 'Lycidas' and the 'Sonnets' to the Johnson who reveres 'Paradise Lost.' His criticism of 'Paradise Lost' is worth all the rest



of his 'Life of Milton.' It is a study of a great poet by a great man. Here Johnson's true veneration for Milton's genius shines forth. Here there is unmistakable enthusiasm for the manner in which "this mighty poet has undertaken and performed" his task. He ascribes to 'Paradise Lost,' in design the first place, in performance the second, among the productions of the human mind. Once and again he defines its essential characteristic by the word which better than any other single term befits it—"sublimity"; and he points us to the very best possible manner of approaching Milton's soaring imagination when he writes, "reality was a scene too narrow for his mind."

One eminent qualification Johnson possessed as a critic of 'Paradise Lost'—his conception of epic poetry. Epic, deriving its lofty traditions from Homer and Virgil, is for Johnson the highest kind of poetry. Unlike Aristotle<sup>1</sup> before him, unlike Edgar Allan Poe since, Johnson regards epic as higher art than tragedy. He means that epic has all the best qualities of tragedy and more. Accepting the teaching of "truths" as one chief function of poetry, he believes that epic effects this with most dignity and power—"in the most affecting manner": epic may possess "dramatic energy" in its dialogue; epic may treat "shades of vice and virtue" as admirably as drama; epic may, like the drama, exhibit skill in drawing character and handling the passions. He would hold that the *passions*, the central themes of the greatest tragedies, are equally important in epic; and that as 'Othello' handles jealousy, 'Macbeth' ambition,

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *περὶ ποιητικῆς*, chap. xxvi.

'King Lear' greed and filial ingratitude, so Satan's ambition and passion for revenge form cardinal points in 'Paradise Lost.' Johnson emphasises the manifold elements that go to the making of an epic—elements historical, dramatic, ethical, and psychological; elements drawn from the poet's knowledge of mankind and external nature. Only a Miltonic genius, he believes, could accumulate the materials needed for a great epic, and treat the antagonism of right and wrong more powerfully than drama could do. To Milton's main conceptions, his imagination and his characters, full justice is done. But there is perhaps too much stress laid upon the didactic side of 'Paradise Lost.' True, it is an epic with a purpose, "to justify the ways of God to man"; and it has a claim to exist far stronger than the "novel with a purpose." Yet Johnson seems occupied with its "teaching" to the neglect of its "pleasing"; and one cannot help feeling that if he had assigned equal value to both parts of his own definition of poetry as "the art of uniting pleasure with truth," he would have reversed his decision that the perusal of 'Paradise Lost' is "a duty rather than a pleasure"; and that we read Milton for "instruction," and retire "harassed." This overlooks the intense pleasure found by sympathetic readers in the flights of Milton's imagination and in the unique melody of his versification. He is the "God-gifted organ voice of England," and "mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies." In the matter of Milton's music, Tennyson's opinion is more convincing than Johnson's.

It is always interesting to note a critic's attitude to-

wards the Satan of Milton. Not a few, from the days of Dryden downwards ('Discourse of Epic Poetry'), have felt that Satan is the real hero of 'Paradise Lost.' Addison maintains, "'Tis certainly the Messiah who is the hero" ('Spectator,' 297): others may incline to believe that as 'Vanity Fair' is a novel without a hero, 'Paradise Lost' may be an epic without a hero. Johnson, in fact, does not encourage the discussion of the question "Who is the hero?" and rebukes Dryden for denying the heroism of Adam because he was overcome. "There is no reason," he adds, "why the hero should not be unfortunate." This sets up a claim for Adam; but Satan bulks largely in Johnson's mind too. Johnson has intense admiration for Milton's happy skill in delineating a character which must be made rebellious without being impious, and defends Milton against the absurd censure passed on him for Satan's impiety. On this subject nothing better can be uttered than Hazlitt's glowing words—"Satan is the most heroic subject that ever was chosen for a poem; and the execution is as perfect as the design is lofty."

It is an essential part of Johnson's method of criticism to draw up a catalogue of defects and faults. Without following him in detail, a few objections may be answered. His objection to 'Paradise Lost,' that its plan comprises "neither human actions nor human manners," amounts to a condemnation of Milton's choice of subject. It is a natural criticism from the standpoint of the eighteenth century, but a criticism dangerous to imagination and romance. Johnson further thinks that because there is no "transaction" in which Milton's

readers could be engaged, the readers must feel "little curiosity"; but curiosity may be felt as to purely imaginary conduct and situations. If Adam and Eve are portrayed in "a state which no other man or woman can ever know," the interest may be all the greater for some minds; and sympathetic readers will find the situation imagined by Milton not unimaginable by themselves.

That the "truths" embodied in 'Paradise Lost' are too familiar to Christians to rouse emotion is a partial limitation in Milton's subject, and Johnson is entitled to remark on it. Yet there again we approach the old danger of emphasising the "teaching" function of poetry to the exclusion of its "pleasing" function. It is not on the didactic but on the imaginative and artistic side that 'Paradise Lost' makes its most powerful appeal and exercises its greatest charm. In short, we do not read 'Paradise Lost' for instruction. Johnson himself was in his sanest mood when he wrote, "Since the end of poetry is pleasure, that cannot be unpoetical with which all are pleased."

Finally, it is at the behest of "common-sense" that Johnson attacks Milton's inconsistency in making his angels now spirit, now matter. The charge needs no long proof—it is true; but is it a crime? Is it worth while writing or reading about fiends or angels too well regulated by the canons of "common-sense"? If Johnson had only remembered his own splendid phrase, "Reality was a scene too narrow for his mind," he would not have sought to try Milton over exactly by the standards of an age of reason.

The wish is a natural one that Johnson had so far departed from his judicial method of criticism as to make an excursion into the comparative method. He was excellently equipped for a full comparison of 'Paradise Lost' with the 'Æneid' of Virgil. Homer was not so closely at his beck; but the bare allusion to Ariosto's wickedness and Tasso's niggardliness in moral instruction produces regret that Johnson did not set himself to compare the epic of English Protestantism with the great Italian epic of medieval Catholicism—Dante's 'Divina Commedia.'

It should be noted that this was not the first time that Johnson had written about Milton. Feeling that Addison in the 'Spectator' had barely touched the question of versification, he had devoted three papers in the 'Rambler' (Nos. 86, 88, 94) to Milton's verse, and two to 'Samson Agonistes.' He had also, in 1750, written a preface to Lauder's essay on 'Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns' in his 'Paradise Lost.' Lauder's plausible forgeries of parallel passages which deceived Johnson into a temporary belief in Milton's plagiarism, were exposed by the Rev. John Douglas in a 'Vindication of Milton,' dated 1751.<sup>1</sup>

Let us leave Johnson's estimate of Milton, remembering that he spoke of him as "that poet whose works may possibly be read when every other monument of British greatness is obliterated"; and that he declared "the reader feels himself in captivity to a higher and nobler mind, and *criticism sinks in admiration*."

<sup>1</sup> See an article on "William Lauder, the Literary Forger," in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for September 1899.

## JOHNSON'S ATTITUDE TO ADDISON.

Turning from the 'Milton,' one is struck with the greater friendliness of tone adopted by Johnson towards Addison as a man. True, he was a Whig; but at least he was no republican or dissenter. When, therefore, Johnson has faults to point out, he does not magnify them; the whole impression left is favourable. Addison's jealousies and wine-bibbing Johnson does not hide—better not; for the attempts made to clear him have carried little conviction. "If he had not that little weakness for wine," says Thackeray genially, "why, we could scarcely have found a fault with him, and could not have liked him as we do."

Johnson treats Addison as a critic with marked deference. In dealing with 'Paradise Lost' he quotes him more than once with approval. If he thinks his criticism "superficial" (p. 158), and "deciding by taste rather than by principles," he yet maintains it served the useful purpose of making Milton popular. Johnson, however, does not share Addison's interest in ballads like 'Chevy Chase,' and despises the "fairy way of writing" for which Addison, with more promise of romanticism in him, felt a liking.

With Johnson's criticisms on Addison's poetry there can be no such quarrel as with his attitude towards Milton's 'Lycidas.' His remarks on Addison's poetry at large go straight to the mark: "there is little of ardour, vehemence, or transport," and "he thinks justly, but he thinks faintly." A *common-sense* critic has been set to catch a *common-sense* poet. One feels that John-

son is justified in pronouncing 'Cato' "the noblest production of Addison's genius," and that he exactly hits the secret of the cold effect of the drama in the remark, "Cato is a being above our solicitude."<sup>1</sup> His regard for 'Cato' was natural in an Oxford man. At Oxford in the early eighteenth century "Addison alone among the play-writers of the day was allowed to have merit. Thrice was 'Cato' acted during the Commemoration of 1712, and each time before a crowded audience."<sup>2</sup> Besides, the Roman genius of Johnson allies him more with Addison than with Milton; for Milton, Latin scholar as he was, had a romantic strain now recalling the Greek lyric, now impelling him to imitate the Greek dramas, while Addison knows so little of Greek literature that in his 'Chevy Chase' papers he thinks Homer wrote to illustrate the evils of dissension among the Greeks in the time of the Persian wars! 'Cato' is now probably best remembered as having contributed at least two familiar quotations to the language:—

"'Tis not in mortals to command success,  
But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it";

and

"The woman that deliberates is lost."

One likes the good words Johnson has for 'A Letter from Italy' with its immortal phrase, "And still I seem

<sup>1</sup> One enjoys seeing Dennis's theory of "poetical justice" shattered by Johnson as untrue to life; but all through the formidably long quotations from that critic the wish is for less Dennis and more Johnson.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Johnson, *His Friends and Critics*, by G. B. Hill, p. 89.

to tread on *classic ground*." But Johnson cannot disprove Warton's declaration that the 'Campaign' is only "a gazette in rhyme": even the simile of the angel, which the 'Tatler' would have to be "one of the noblest thoughts that ever entered into the heart of man," strikes a modern reader as not worth Johnson's minute analysis. Johnson's favourable view of Addison's opera 'Rosamond' is surprising; and the dictum that "if Addison had cultivated the lighter parts of poetry he would probably have excelled," proves that Johnson was no guide to light poetry.

The remarks on Addison's work in the 'Tatler' and 'Spectator' whet the appetite for more; for one cannot but feel that Addison lives for us now as a prose-writer, and not as a poet or dramatist. For us he is Addison of the 'Spectator,' the author who, if he did not create, at least perfected Sir Roger de Coverley, and added the half-formed love-story of the fair perverse widow, of whom the knight used to repeat so wistfully, "she has certainly the finest hand of any woman in the world." The Addison whom we know and like is he whose characters stand out as clear as those of the great novelists, he who introduced to us that "odd unaccountable fellow," the 'Spectator' himself, so silent and observant; the gallant Will Honeycomb, a lady-killer of Queen Anne's day; Will Wimble, keenest of sportsmen on field and river; and Tom Touchy, "famous for taking the law of everybody." For us Addison is the humorous satirist of the manners, fashions, and foibles of his time, the quiet reflective dreamer of the 'Vision of Mirza,' the author of the



critical papers on Milton, the tasteful admirer of the ballad of 'Chevy Chase,' and therein more appreciative than Dr Johnson himself. For if 'Cato' be the "noblest production of Addison's genius," surely Sir Roger is the most delightful. In the drama, Addison is coldly Roman, in the 'Spectator' he is at his gentlest. And it is easier to believe with Thackeray in his kindness as a satirist than to accept Professor Minto's theory of its essentially malevolent basis. The fact that Addison assails the type and not the individual preserves him from malice; and if he has not all Chaucer's geniality, he has none of Swift's bitterness. Though the scheme of the 'Lives of the Poets' did not permit Johnson to write at greater length on Addison's prose in general and the 'Spectator' in particular, what we have is excellent. What could be better said than that his prose is the model of the middle style? It is, indeed, an *aurea mediocritas*. And its genuinely English and idiomatic character is noted by Johnson, and was illustrated by Dr Burney's remark, recorded by Boswell, that while a 'Rambler' of Johnson would easily be translated into a classical or modern language, one of Addison's 'Spectators' would present extreme difficulty. No greater compliment will ever be paid Addison than the famous advice with which Johnson closes his essay: "Whoever wishes to attain an English style familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

THE LIVES OF THE POETS: ORIGIN AND RANGE  
OF THE SCHEME.

We owe Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets' to commercial competition. In 1777 a project had been started in Edinburgh to publish a collection of British poets, beginning with Chaucer; and the London booksellers, dreading infringements upon their rights, decided to issue a rival collection. On Easter Eve they secured Johnson's consent to write short biographical introductions to the poets whose works they proposed to print. The fee named was 200 guineas; but the booksellers subsequently made two further payments of 100 guineas each for Johnson's services. The scheme at first<sup>1</sup> included Chaucer, but was somehow narrowed, so that Chaucer and the Elizabethans were excluded, and the earliest poet treated was Cowley (1618-1667). Dramatic works were not included. The range was thus the non-dramatic poetry of rather over a century,—from the eve of the Restoration to the eve of the French Revolution, from Cowley, Waller, and Denham to Collins and Gray.

It ought to be remembered that the fifty-two poets treated were not selected by Johnson but by his employers, the publishers, although he it was who suggested Thomson and four minor worthies—Blackmore, Pomfret, Yalden, and Watts. The pity is that he did not seek to educate his masters, by reminding them of Elizabethans such as Spenser and Drayton. But it is typical of Johnson and of his age that "one of the

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Dilly to Boswell ('Life of Johnson,' chap. xxxii.)

fathers of English poetry" should be Denham<sup>1</sup> in the seventeenth century, not Chaucer in the fourteenth. For Johnson—apart from the drama—English poetry before 1650, before the rise of the heroic couplet, was a *quantité négligeable*. Pity, also, that Johnson should have allowed a bookseller's objection to exclude Goldsmith.

#### COMPLETION OF THE WORK IN FOUR YEARS.

Johnson's first impression of the nature of his task may be gathered from his words written to Boswell:<sup>2</sup> "I am engaged to write little Lives and little Prefaces to a little edition of the 'English Poets.'" But it was far more than that. His task grew under his hands; and many of the "little Lives" became great—often a full biography followed by a full criticism. It was December 1777 before the first Life, that of Cowley, was finished. Twenty-two Lives were published in 1779 with the accompanying poems; the remaining thirty in 1781. The 'Milton' was the work of six weeks at the beginning of 1779, the 'Addison' belongs to the beginning of 1780. Johnson had at first worked with vigour, but gradually signs of flagging appeared—an indisposition to verify details, or even accept corrections, of which the faithful "Bozzy" complains; a certain willingness to accept aid, shown in permitting Croft to sketch Young's life; and a desire to save himself trouble, which led him to borrow Parnell's life from Goldsmith, and use his own old life of Savage without reducing it to a reasonable length.

<sup>1</sup> See Johnson's 'Life of Denham.'

<sup>2</sup> May 3, 1777. 'Life of Johnson,' chap. xxxi.

No doubt it was with something of the same relief as Gibbon felt seven years later, on concluding his 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' that Johnson wrote at Easter 1781, "Some time in March I finished the 'Lives of the Poets,' which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work and working with vigour and haste."

### JOHNSON'S FITNESS FOR THE WORK.

Johnson possessed eminent qualifications for writing such Lives. A man of about seventy, he had behind him a career of literary distinction, and long acquaintance with literary men. His first-hand knowledge of many of the poets themselves and of their works was unequalled. A great part of his task was to write of years *quorum pars magna fuit*: consequently he largely relied on memory and the literary experience of a lifetime; and this method, though comfortable and productive of an easy liveliness of style, accounts for many inaccuracies. Doubtless many sympathise with his words in the 'Life of Dryden,' "to adjust the minute events of literary history is tedious and troublesome," and from this point of view do not look for<sup>1</sup> absolute accuracy in dates or genealogy or even quotation in the Lives, but take them thankfully as Johnson has bequeathed them. Johnson took pains, but not infinite pains. It would be a mistake, of course, to imagine that he did not draw from existing sources. Thus, for his 'Milton,' he consulted

<sup>1</sup> The more glaring errors are recorded in the Preface to Cunningham's edition of the 'Lives of the Poets.'

lives of his subject by Milton's nephew, Edward Phillips, by Anthony Wood in 'Athenæ Oxonienses,' by Toland, by Elijah Fenton, by Richardson, Dr Birch, and Bishop Newton, and he mentions other authorities. And in the 'Addison' he cites Tickell, Steele, Budgell, Swift, Dr Warton, and others. In writing many of the Lives he had beside him in MS. Spence's 'Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men.' He drew, then, from written sources, but not exhaustively; indeed, in the original advertisement he admits the likelihood of error, and apologises for defects. But there were unwritten sources which none could tap so well as Johnson—his knowledge of human life and of the human heart, and his acquaintance with many a tradition of Grub Street. He had thought and spoken on literature as none of his day had done: and the thinking bears fruit in excellent reflections, while the speech lends him a readier utterance and lighter style.

#### THE VALUE OF THE LIVES.

What is the value of the 'Lives of the Poets'? It has many claims. Judged by *style* alone, it is a great work. The facts are often incorrect and the criticisms wrong, but the English is good. It is Johnson's last work, in some respects his best. The most readable of his works, it is certainly all the more charming that its ease and clearness echo the brilliancy of his conversation, and that it is illuminated by well-told tales; for without the Lives the history of literature would have been poorer by many a good

story. Then there is the *human interest* already mentioned. The subtle reflections on human life imparts a perennial value to these Lives : under Johnson's magic wand they rise from the particular to the universal, from what was true in the eighteenth century to what is true for all time. But the work is most valuable viewed as the great document of eighteenth-century criticism. In its own day it was an epoch-making work, because no such body of criticism had ever before issued from one man's brain. There can be no better historical introduction to the study of English poetry than Johnson's Lives, no better way of appreciating the romantic spirit of modern literature than to understand the most representative criticism of the eighteenth century. It is long since Matthew Arnold pronounced the best of the Lives to be so many *points de repère*, so many "natural centres, by returning to which we can always find our way again." Among the classics of criticism the 'Lives of the Poets' will always rank as one of the greatest. Much is antiquated, because we wear no spectacles of the eighteenth century, and because we see so much the more clearly for Johnson's pioneer work. It is no insult to the old doctor to disagree with his criticisms ; for criticisms age with time, and insincere acceptance of his pronouncements would be the falsest of testimonies to his memory. Yet much is permanent in his pregnant reflections and strong common-sense. To disparage his criticism overmuch is to sit ungratefully in judgment upon him. Here, too, as in all great works, we must show reverence.

In the Lives the greatest names are unquestionably

those chosen by Matthew Arnold for his 'Six Chief Lives' — Milton, Dryden, Swift, Addison, Pope, and Gray. But they are not all of equal worth. Johnson's best Lives are those of Dryden and Pope—naturally so; for these were the two poets who wielded the most powerful influence on the eighteenth century. The 'Milton,' faulty and unfair though it be, is quite the most interesting of all the Lives: it is a great man's study of another great man; and it brings us even more than the other Lives do, close to the personality of Johnson himself, with his fierce hatred of Milton's religious and political views, his lack of sympathy with some aspects, and his whole-hearted admiration for other aspects of Milton's genius. The 'Addison' is an entertaining life, marked by shrewd judgment and charity of feeling. Disliking Addison for his politics, as Cunningham points out, Johnson yet loved him for his humour, his exquisite English, and his moral tendency. The two lives contained in this edition are of especial significance in the history of letters, — Milton as the greatest poet of the second half of the seventeenth century, Addison as the greatest essayist of the first half of the eighteenth century. The poorest of the Lives is that of Gray: Johnson was quite unable to appreciate the romantic element in his poetry. It is significant that the fresh note in English poetry, sounded by Thomson and Collins, is entirely lost upon this critic. Johnson's own favourite was the Life of Cowley; and that must always be important for its critique on the "Metaphysical" Poets. But there are many names on the list that mean nothing now except to the professed student of

literature: how many know even by name Stepney, Pomfret, Walsh, Smith, Duke, King, Yalden, Broome, Pitt, and others of the company? Most will read with surprise that "perhaps no composition in our language has been oftener perused than Pomfret's 'Choice,'" or that Walsh was thought by Dryden "the best critic in the nation."

#### RECEPTION.

Johnson's work had its admirers from the first. Coming from the literary dictator of the day, it compelled respect. Boswell considered the Lives "the richest, most beautiful, and indeed most perfect production of Johnson's pen," and uttered the prophecy, "This is the work which of all Dr Johnson's writings will perhaps be read most generally and with most pleasure." But attacks were not wanting. Disappointment was freely expressed with his treatment of Thomson, Collins, and Gray; and most especially was he assailed for his bitterness towards Milton. "I could thrash his old jacket," exclaimed Cowper, "till I made his pension jingle in his pocket." But outcry did not daunt Johnson: he simply declared, "I have given my opinion sincerely. Let them show where they think me wrong."



## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF JOHNSON'S LIFE AND TIMES.

- 1709. Born at Lichfield, September 18; son of a bookseller.
  - 1709. Steele and Addison, the 'Tatler.'
  - 1711. Pope, 'Essay on Criticism.' Addison and Steele, the 'Spectator.' Hume born.
  - 1712. Pope, the 'Messiah.'
  - 1713. Addison, 'Cato.'
- 1716. Lichfield grammar-school.
  - 1716. Garrick and Gray born.
  - 1719. Defoe, 'Robinson Crusoe,' Part I. Addison died.
- 1724. Sent to Stourbridge school.
  - 1724. Swift, 'Drapier Letters.'
  - 1726. Thomson, 'Winter.' Swift, 'Gulliver's Travels.'
- 1728. Entered at Pembroke College, Oxford (October), age nineteen.
  - 1728. Goldsmith born.
- 1729. Leaves the university (December), but, according to Boswell, in autumn 1731.
  - 1729. Law, 'Serious Call.' Pope, 'Dunciad' (earlier form). Burke born; Steele died.
- 1731. Death of his father.
- 1732. Usher in school at Market-Bosworth, Leicestershire.
  - 1732. Pope, 'Essay on Man,' I. and II.
- 1733. In Birmingham. Translates Lobo's 'Voyage to Abyssinia.'
- 1734. In Lichfield again. Writes to Cave, asking literary work.
- 1735. Marries Mrs Porter, widow of a Birmingham tradesman, July 9 (age twenty-five).
  - 1735. Pope, 'Epistles.'
- 1736. Starts private school at Edial, near Lichfield.
- 1737. Goes to London with David Garrick in March (age twenty-seven). Begins writing for Cave's 'Gentleman's Magazine.'
  - 1737. Shenstone, 'Schoolmistress.' Gibbon born.
- 1738. Publishes 'London,' a poem. Draws Pope's attention.
- 1740-42. Edits Cave's Parliamentary Reports under title, 'The Senate of Lilliput.'

- 1740. Richardson, 'Pamela.' Garrick, 'Lying Valet.'
- 1742. Collins, 'Persian Eclogues.' Fielding, 'Joseph Andrews.'
- 1744. 'Life of Savage.'
- 1744. Pope died.
- 1745. 'Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth.'
- 1747. Proposals for Dictionary of the English Language—Prospectus addressed to Lord Chesterfield.
- 1747. Gray, 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton.'
- 1748. Richardson, 'Clarissa Harlowe.' Smollett, 'Roderick Random.' Thomson, 'Castle of Indolence.'
- 1749. Publishes 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' a poem. In February Garrick produces 'Irene' at Drury Lane for nine nights. In winter Johnson starts his club in Ivy Lane (age forty).
- 1749. Fielding, 'Tom Jones.'
- 1750-52. 'Rambler' twice weekly, till March 1752. His wife dies that month.
- 1751. Gray, 'Elegy written in a Country Churchyard.'
- Fielding, 'Amelia.'
- 1753. Contributes to the 'Adventurer.'
- 1753. Earl of Chesterfield, the 'World.' Richardson, 'Sir Charles Grandison.'
- 1754. Hume, 'History of Great Britain,' vol. i. Fielding died.
- 1755. His English Dictionary published in two folio vols. Oxford confers M.A. on him.
- 1756. Burke, 'Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.'
- 1758-60. Contributes to the 'Universal Chronicle' the papers known as the 'Idler.'
- 1759. His mother dies. 'Rasselas' written to defray expenses of her funeral.
- 1759. Robertson, 'History of Scotland.' Sterne, 'Tristram Shandy,' vols. i. and ii. Collins died.
- 1760. Goldsmith, 'Citizen of the World.'
- 1762. Pension of £300 from the Crown.
- 1762. Macpherson, 'Poems of Ossian.'
- 1763. Meets Boswell, then twenty-two (May—age fifty-three).
- 1764. The Literary Club instituted by Johnson and Sir J. Reynolds. Meets at the Turk's Head, Gerard Street, Soho.
- 1764. Goldsmith, 'The Traveller.' Walpole, 'Castle of Otranto.'

1765. Trinity College, Dublin, confers LL.D. on him. Edition of Shakespeare published.
  1765. Percy, 'Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.'
  1766. Goldsmith, 'Vicar of Wakefield.'
  1769. "Junius" Letters begin. Robertson, 'History of Charles V.'
1770. Political pamphlets—'The False Alarm.'
  1770. Beattie, 'Essay on Truth.' Burke, 'Thoughts on the Present Discontents.' Wordsworth born.
1771. 'Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands.'
  1771. Beattie, 'Minstrel' (Book I.) Gray died; Scott born.
  1772. Coleridge born.
1773. Tour in Scotland and the Hebrides with Boswell (age sixty-three).
  1773. Goldsmith, 'She Stoops to Conquer.'
1774. Welsh tour with the Thrales.
  1774. Burke, 'Speech on American Taxation.' Thomas Warton, 'History of English Poetry' (vol. i.) Goldsmith died; Southey born.
1775. D.C.L. Oxford. With the Thrales in France. Publishes 'Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland' and 'Taxation no Tyranny.'
  1775. Burke, 'Speech on Conciliation with America.' Sheridan, the 'Rivals.' Lamb born.
  1776. Gibbon, 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' vol. i. Adam Smith, 'Wealth of Nations.' Hume died.
1777. Begins the 'Lives of the Poets.'
  1777. Sheridan, 'School for Scandal.'
  1778. Frances Burney, 'Evelina.' Sir J. Reynolds, 'Seven Discourses.'
1779. First twenty-two Lives published as Prefaces to accompanying poems.
  1779. J. Newton and Cowper, 'Olney Hymns.' Garrick died.
1781. 'Lives of the Poets' completed.
  1781. Erasmus Darwin, 'Botanic Garden.'
1783. A revised edition of the Lives.
  1783. Blake, 'Poetical Sketches.' Crabbe, the 'Village.'
1784. Death, December 13, aged seventy-five.

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF MILTON'S LIFE.

- 1608. Born at the Spread-Eagle, Bread Street, London (December 9).
- 1620. At St Paul's school. Charles Diodati a school-friend.
- 1624. Paraphrases Psalms 114 and 136.
- 1625. Enters a sizar at Christ College, Cambridge (Johnson gives 1624 after Old Style).
- 1627. College exercises. Probably rusticated by the authorities.
- 1628. B.A. Obtains no fellowship.

## PERIOD I.—EARLY POEMS AND TRAINING BY STUDY AND TRAVEL.

- 1629. Ode 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity,' and other poems.
- 1631. Sonnet 'On his being arrived to the Age of Twenty-three.'
- 1632. M.A. Begins a course of classical studies at Horton in Bucks. Lives there with his father five years. 'L'Allegro.' *Il Penseroso*.'
- 1634. Masque of 'Comus' presented at Ludlow.
- 1637. 'Lycidas.' 'Arcades.' Death of his mother.
- 1638. Travels abroad. Paris and Italy. Honoured by the learned in Florence and Rome.
- 1639. Visits Galileo. Hearing of differences between King and Parliament, drops his purpose of visiting Sicily and Greece. Returns to England by Venice, Geneva, and France. Lodges in St Bride's Churchyard, teaching his nephews, John and Edward Philips, and other youths.

## PERIOD II.—POLITICAL AND CONTROVERSIAL.

- 1641. Tracts 'Of Reformation'—'Of Prelatical Episcopacy.'
- 1642. 'The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy,'—'Animadversions' (upon Bishop Hall's Defence against Smectymnuus)—'An Apology' (for Smectymnuus).
- 1643. Marries Mary Powell (of a Cavalier family) : she leaves him for her father's house. 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce' (first of several tracts on Marriage and Divorce).

- 1644. Tract 'Of Education'—*'Areopagitica.'*
- 1645. Takes a larger house in Barbican to accommodate pupils. Collected Latin and English poems published. Reconciliation with his wife. His generosity to her family.
- 1647. His father dies. Removes to a smaller house in Holborn.
- 1649. 'Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.' Made Latin Secretary to the Council of State (March 15—age forty). His 'Iconoclastes' in reply to 'Icon Basilike.'
- 1650. Loses sight of his left eye.
- 1651. 'Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio' (a Latin reply to Salmasius' Defence of Charles I.)
- 1652. Milton becomes totally blind.
- 1653. His wife Mary dies ("1653 or 1654"—Masson).
- 1654. 'Defensio Secunda.'
- 1656. Marries Catherine Woodcock, who died 1658. Resumes former literary schemes (an epic, a Latin dictionary, and history).
- 1658. 'Paradise Lost' begun.
- 1659. Salary as Latin Secretary ceases. More pamphlets.
- 1660. 'The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth.' Restoration of Charles II. Milton hides himself. 'Act of Oblivion.'

PERIOD III.—CREATIVE.

- 1663. Marries Elizabeth Minshull. Lives in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields, for the closing decade of his life. Elwood, the Quaker, reads Latin to him.
- 1665. Plague in London—Milton takes refuge in Chalfont, Bucks. 'Paradise Lost' completed (age fifty-six).
- 1667. His copy of 'Paradise Lost' sold for £5—published.
- 1670. 'History of Britain' published (begun 1648).
- 1671. 'Paradise Regained' and 'Samson Agonistes.'
- 1672. 'Artis Logicæ plenior Institutio.'
- 1673. 'Treatise of True Religion'—'Juvenile Poems' reprinted (including most of his Sonnets).
- 1674. A collection of his 'Familiar Epistles' (Latin). Dies November 8.

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF ADDISON'S LIFE.

- 1672. Born on May-Day at the Rectory of Milston, Wilts.
- 1683. His father Dean of Lichfield Cathedral. Addison at Lichfield grammar-school. Conducts a "barring-out."
- 1685. The Charterhouse. Dick Steele is a schoolfellow.
- 1687. Entered at Queen's College, Oxford (age fifteen); afterwards elected Demy at Magdalen owing to his skill in Latin verse.
- 1693. M.A. (age twenty-one). Verses 'To Mr Dryden.'
- 1694. 'An Account of the Greatest English Poets' (in heroic couplets), in which Shakespeare is not mentioned.
- 1695. Befriended by Somers (Lord-Keeper) and Montague (Chancellor of Exchequer and Whig leader of the Commons). Poem 'To the King.'
- 1697. Verse translations from Ovid's 'Metamorphoses.' Latin verses on Peace of Ryswick. Probationary fellow of Magdalen.
- 1698. Fellowship (retained till 1711).
- 1699. 'Musæ Anglicanæ,' vol. ii. Travelling grant of £300 a-year from the Crown. In France.
- 1700. Meets Boileau in Paris.
- 1701. In Italy. 'A Letter from Italy' to Charles (Montague) Lord Halifax. 'Dialogues on Medals.' Four Acts of 'Cato' written. In Switzerland.
- 1702. In Austria and Germany. Death of William III. Crown grant died with the king.
- 1703. His father dies. Returns to England through Holland. Elected member of Kit-cat Club.
- 1704. 'The Campaign' (in honour of Marlborough's victory at Blenheim). Succeeds Locke as Commissioner of Appeals (age thirty-two). 'Remarks on Several Parts of Italy.'
- 1705. Writes prologue to Steele's 'Tender Husband.' Friendly with Swift.
- 1706. Under-Secretary of State (age thirty-four).
- 1707. His opera 'Rosamond' produced at Drury Lane. Acted only three times. 'The Present State of the War.' At

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—ADDISON. lxvii

- the Court of Hanover with Lord Halifax (Johnson's date is 1705).
1708. M.P. for Lostwithiel in Cornwall (afterwards unseated). Retires from Under-Secretaryship.
1709. In Ireland as Secretary to Lord-Lieutenant Wharton. M.P. for Cavan. Steele's first 'Tatler' (April 12th, not 22nd as in Johnson): Addison writes No. 18 and others. Returned member for Malmesbury, which he represents for the rest of his life.
1710. Fall of the Whigs. Loses his Irish Secretaryship, but retains keepership of Irish Records: starts the 'Whig Examiner' (five numbers appeared). Swift and Addison drift apart in politics and friendship.
1711. The 'Tatler' dropped (January 2). The 'Spectator' begun (March 1). Frequents Button's Coffee-House with a circle of associates. Buys Estate of Bilton, Warwickshire, for £10,000.
1712. Friendly with Pope, Ambrose Philips, and others. First issue of the 'Spectator'; ends with No. 555 (December 6).
1713. Writes for the 'Guardian.' 'Cato' acted with success (April 14): prologue by Pope. 'Trial of Count Tariff' (to expose treaty of commerce with France).
1714. Death of Queen Anne. Fall of the Tories. Secretary to the Lords-Justices. The 'Spectator' revived (vol. viii., 80 numbers). Secretary to Sunderland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.
1715. Resigns Irish Secretaryship. Commissioner of Trade and Plantations (*i.e.* Colonies). The 'Freeholder,' an anti-Jacobite paper. (December 1715 till June 1716.)
1716. The 'Drummer' (a comedy), produced at Drury Lane, March 10; ran three nights. Marries the Dowager-Countess of Warwick (August 3).
1717. Secretary of State in Sunderland's Ministry. His daughter Charlotte born. Grant of £3000 secret-service money.
1718. Resigns Secretaryship (March 14) owing to failing health. Pension of £1600 (not £1500 as in Johnson). Treatise 'Of the Christian Religion.'
1719. The 'Old Whig' (March-April). Quarrels with Steele regarding the Peerage Bill. Dies June 17, aged forty-seven. Buried in Westminster Abbey.

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# ARGUMENT OF THE 'MILTON.'

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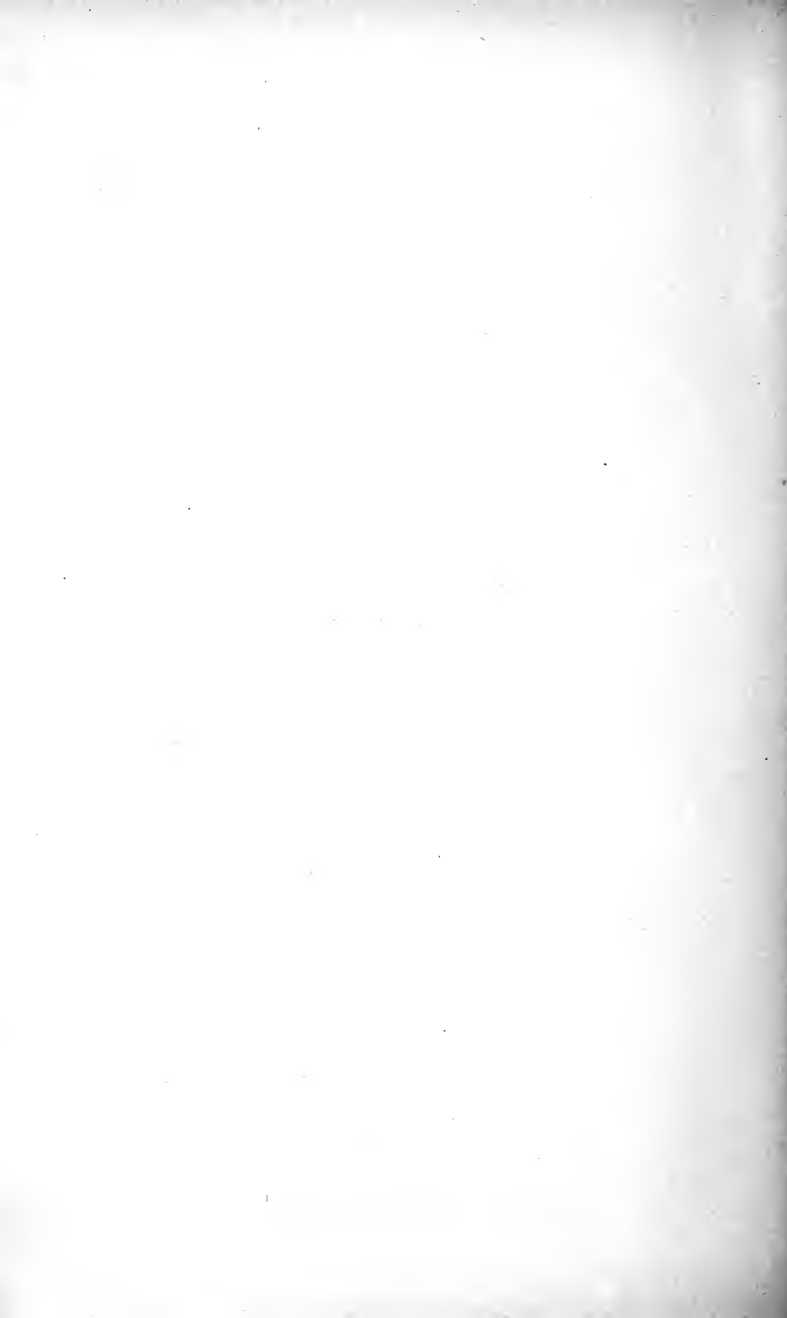
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MILTON









John Milton.

*From the Engraving by William Faithorne  
in the National Portrait Gallery.*

## M I L T O N.

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THE life of Milton has been already written in so many forms, and with such minute inquiry, that I might perhaps more properly have contented myself with the addition of a few notes to Mr Fenton's elegant Abridgment, but that a new narrative was thought 5 necessary to the uniformity of this edition.

JOHN MILTON was by birth a gentleman, descended from the proprietors of Milton, near Thame in Oxfordshire, one of whom forfeited his estate in the times of York and Lancaster. Which side he took I know, 10 not; his descendant inherited no veneration for the White Rose. His grandfather John was keeper of the forest of Shotover, a zealous papist, who disinherited his son because he had forsaken the religion of his ancestors. His father, John, who was the son disin- 15 herited, had recourse for his support to the profession of a scrivener. He was a man eminent for his skill in music, many of his compositions being still to be found; and his reputation in his profession was such,

that he grew rich, and retired to an estate. He had probably more than common literature, as his son addresses him in one of his most elaborate Latin poems. He married a gentlewoman of the name of Caston, a  
 5 Welsh family, by whom he had two sons, John, the poet, and Christopher, who studied the law, and adhered, as the law taught him, to the king's party, for which he was a while persecuted; but having by his brother's interest obtained permission to live in quiet,  
 10 he supported himself so honourably by chamber-practice, that, soon after the accession of King James, he was knighted and made a judge; but, his constitution being too weak for business, he retired before any disreputable compliances became necessary.  
 15 He had likewise a daughter, Anne, whom he married with a considerable fortune to Edward Philips, who came from Shrewsbury, and rose in the Crown Office to be secondary: by him she had two sons, John and Edward, who were educated by the poet, and from  
 20 whom is derived the only authentic account of his domestic manners.

John, the poet, was born in his father's house, at the Spread Eagle in Bread Street, December 9, 1608, between six and seven in the morning. His father  
 :25: appears to have been very solicitous about his education; for he was instructed at first by private tuition under the care of Thomas Young, who was afterwards chaplain to the English merchants at Hamburgh, and of whom we have reason to think well, since his scholar  
 30 considered him as worthy of an epistolary elegy. He was then sent to St Paul's school, under the care of Mr Gill; and removed, in the beginning of his six-

teenth year, to Christ's College in Cambridge, where he entered a sizar, February 12, 1624. He was at this time eminently skilled in the Latin tongue; and he himself, by annexing the dates to his first compositions, a boast of which the learned Politian had given him an example, seems to commend the earliness of his own proficiency to the notice of posterity. But the products of his vernal fertility have been surpassed by many, and particularly by his contemporary Cowley. Of the powers of the mind it is difficult to form an estimate: many have excelled Milton in their first essays who never rose to works like 'Paradise Lost.'

At fifteen—a date which he uses till he is sixteen—he translated or versified two Psalms, cxiv. and cxxxvi., which he thought worthy of the public eye; but they raise no great expectations: they would in any numerous school have obtained praise, but not excited wonder. Many of his elegies appear to have been written in his eighteenth year, by which it appears that he had then read the Roman authors with very nice discernment. I once heard Mr Hampton, the translator of Polybius, remark, what I think is true, that Milton was the first Englishman who, after the revival of letters, wrote Latin verses with classic elegance. If any exceptions can be made, they are very few. Haddon and Ascham, the pride of Elizabeth's reign, however they may have succeeded in prose, no sooner attempt verses than they provoke derision. If we produced anything worthy of notice before the elegies of Milton, it was perhaps Alabaster's 'Roxana.' Of these exercises, which the rules of the university required, some were published by him in his maturer years.

They had been undoubtedly applauded, for they were such as few can perform ; yet there is reason to suspect that he was regarded in his college with no great fondness. That he obtained no fellowship is certain ; but  
 5 the unkindness with which he was treated was not merely negative. I am ashamed to relate what I fear is true, that Milton was one of the last students in either university that suffered the public indignity of corporal correction.

- 10 It was, in the violence of controversial hostility, objected to him, that he was expelled. This he steadily denies, and it was apparently not true ; but it seems plain, from his own verses to Diodati, that he had incurred *rustication*, a temporary dismissal into the  
 15 country, with perhaps the loss of a term.

- Me tenet urbs reflua quam Thamesis alluit unda,  
 Meque nec invitum patria dulcis habet.  
 Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura revisere Camum,  
 Nec dudum *vetiti* me *laris* angit amor. —  
 20 Nec duri libet usque minas perferre magistri,  
 Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo.  
 Si sit hoc *exilium* patrias adiisse penates,  
 Et vacuum curis otia grata sequi,  
 Non ego vel *profugi* nomen sortemve recuso,  
 25 Lætus et *exilii* conditione fruor.

- I cannot find any meaning but this, which even kindness and reverence can give to the term, *vetiti laris*, “a habitation from which he is excluded” ; or how *exile* can be otherwise interpreted. He declares yet  
 30 more, that he is weary of enduring *the threats of a rigorous master, and something else, which a temper like his cannot undergo*. What was more than threat was probably punishment. This poem, which mentions

his *exile*, proves likewise that it was not perpetual ; for it concludes with a resolution of returning some time to Cambridge. And it may be conjectured, from the willingness with which he has perpetuated the memory of his exile, that its cause was such as gave him no shame. 5

He took both the usual degrees—that of Bachelor in 1628, and that of Master in 1632 ; but he left the university with no kindness for its institution, alienated either by the injudicious severity of his governors, or 10 his own captious perverseness. The cause cannot now be known, but the effect appears in his writings. His scheme of education, inscribed to Hartlib, supersedes all academical instruction, being intended to comprise the whole time which men usually spend in 15 literature, from their entrance upon grammar, till they proceed, as it is called, Masters of Arts. And in his discourse ‘On the likeliest Way to remove Hirelings out of the Church,’ he ingeniously proposes that *the profits of the lands forfeited by the act for superstitious* 20 *uses should be applied to such academies all over the land where languages and arts may be taught together, so that youth may be at once brought up to a competency of learning and an honest trade, by which means such of them as had the gift, being enabled to support themselves* 25 *(without tithes) by the latter, may, by the help of the former, become worthy preachers.*

One of his objections to academical education, as it was then conducted, is, that men designed for orders in the Church were permitted to act plays, *writhing* 30 *and unboning their clergy limbs to all the antic and dishonest gestures of Trincalos and buffoons, prostit-*

*ing the shame of that ministry which they had, or were near having, to the eyes of courtiers and court ladies, their grooms and mademoiselles.* This is sufficiently peevish in a man who, when he mentions his exile  
5 from the college, relates, with great luxuriance, the compensation which the pleasures of the theatre afford him. Plays were therefore only criminal when they were acted by academics.

He went to the university with a design of entering  
10 into the Church, but in time altered his mind; for he declared, that whoever became a clergyman must "subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that could retch, he must straight perjure himself. He thought it better to  
15 prefer a blameless silence before the office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing." These expressions are, I find, applied to the subscription of the Articles; but it seems more probable that they relate to canonical obedience. I know not any  
20 of the Articles which seem to thwart his opinions; but the thoughts of obedience, whether canonical or civil, raised his indignation.

His unwillingness to engage in the ministry, perhaps not yet advanced to a settled resolution of declining it,  
25 appears in a letter to one of his friends, who had reproved his suspended and dilatory life, which he seems to have imputed to an insatiable curiosity and fantastic luxury of various knowledge. To this he writes a cool and plausible answer, in which he endeavours to per-  
30 suade him that the delay proceeds not from the delights of desultory study, but from the desire of obtaining more fitness for his task; and that he goes on, *not*



*taking thought of being late, so it give advantage to be more fit.*

When he left the university he returned to his father, then residing at Horton in Buckinghamshire, with whom he lived five years, in which time he is 5 said to have read all the Greek and Latin writers. With what limitations this universality is to be understood, who shall inform us?

It might be supposed that he who read so much should have done nothing else; but Milton found time 10 to write the Masque of 'Comus,' which was presented at Ludlow, then the residence of the Lord President of Wales, in 1634; and had the honour of being acted by the Earl of Bridgewater's sons and daughter. The fiction is derived from Homer's Circe; but we never 15 can refuse to any modern the liberty of borrowing from Homer—

"A quo ceu fonte perenni  
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis."

His next production was 'Lycidas,' an elegy, written 20 in 1637, on the death of Mr King, the son of Sir John King, Secretary for Ireland in the time of Elizabeth, James, and Charles. King was much a favourite at Cambridge, and many of the wits joined to do honour to his memory. Milton's acquaintance with the Italian 25 writers may be discovered by a mixture of longer and shorter verses, according to the rules of Tuscan poetry, and his malignity to the Church by some lines which are interpreted as threatening its extermination. He is supposed about this time to have written his 30 'Arcades,' for while he lived at Horton he used

sometimes to steal from his studies a few days, which he spent at Harefield, the house of the Countess Dowager of Derby, where the 'Arcades' made part of a dramatic entertainment.

- 5 He began now to grow weary of the country, and had some purpose of taking chambers in the Inns of Court, when the death of his mother set him at liberty to travel, for which he obtained his father's consent, and Sir Henry Wotton's directions, with the celebrated  
 10 precept of prudence, *I pensieri stretti, ed il viso sciolto* — "thoughts close, and looks loose." In 1638 he left England, and went first to Paris, where, by the favour of Lord Scudamore, he had the opportunity of visiting Grotius, then residing at the French court as ambas-  
 15 sador from Christina of Sweden. From Paris he hasted into Italy, of which he had with particular diligence studied the language and literature; and, though he seems to have intended a very quick perambulation of the country, stayed two months at  
 20 Florence, where he found his way into the academies, and produced his compositions with such applause as appears to have exalted him in his own opinion, and confirmed him in the hope that, "by labour and intense study, which," says he, "I take to be my portion  
 25 in this life, joined with a strong propensity of nature," he might "leave something so written to after-times as they should not willingly let it die."

It appears, in all his writings, that he had the usual concomitant of great abilities, a lofty and steady con-  
 30 fidence in himself, perhaps not without some contempt of others; for scarcely any man ever wrote so much, and praised so few. Of his praise he was very frugal,

as he set its value high, and considered his mention of a name as a security against the waste of time, and a certain preservative from oblivion. At Florence he could not indeed complain that his merit wanted distinction. Carlo Dati presented him with an encomi- 5  
 astic inscription, in the tumid lapidary style; and Francini wrote him an ode, of which the first stanza is only empty noise; the rest are perhaps too diffuse on common topics; but the last is natural and beautiful.

From Florence he went to Siena, and from Siena 10  
 to Rome, where he was again received with kindness by the learned and the great. Holstenius, the keeper of the Vatican library, who had resided three years at Oxford, introduced him to Cardinal Barberini, and he, at a musical entertainment, waited for him at the door, 15  
 and led him by the hand into the assembly. Here Selvaggi praised him in a distich, and Salsilli in a tetrastich, neither of them of much value. The Italians were gainers by this literary commerce, for the encomiums with which Milton repaid Salsilli, though 20  
 not secure against a stern grammarian, turn the balance indisputably in Milton's favour. Of these Italian testimonies, poor as they are, he was proud enough to publish them before his poems; though he says he cannot be suspected but to have known that they were 25  
 said *non tam de se, quam supra se*.

At Rome, as at Florence, he stayed only two months—a time indeed sufficient, if he desired only to ramble with an explainer of its antiquities, or to view palaces and count pictures, but certainly too short for the con- 30  
 templation of learning, policy, or manners. From Rome he passed on to Naples, in company of a

hermit, a companion from whom little could be expected; yet to him Milton owed his introduction to Manso, Marquis of Villa, who had been before the patron of Tasso. Manso was enough delighted with  
5 his accomplishments to honour him with a sorry distich, in which he commends him for everything but his religion; and Milton, in return, addressed him in a Latin poem, which must have raised a high opinion of English elegance and literature.

10 His purpose was now to have visited Sicily and Greece; but hearing of the differences between the king and parliament, he thought it proper to hasten home, rather than pass his life in foreign amusements while his countrymen were contending for their rights.  
15 He therefore came back to Rome—though the merchants informed him of plots laid against him by the Jesuits for the liberty of his conversations on religion. He had sense enough to judge that there was no danger, and therefore kept on his way, and acted as  
20 before, neither obtruding nor shunning controversy. He had perhaps given some offence by visiting Galileo, then a prisoner in the Inquisition for philosophical heresy; and at Naples he was told by Manso that, by his declarations on religious ques-  
25 tions, he had excluded himself from some distinctions which he should otherwise have paid him. But such conduct, though it did not please, was yet sufficiently safe; and Milton stayed two months more at Rome, and went on to Florence without molestation.

30 From Florence he visited Lucca. He afterwards went to Venice, and having sent away a collection of music and other books, travelled to Geneva, which he

probably considered as the metropolis of orthodoxy. Here he reposed as in a congenial element, and became acquainted with John Diodati and Frederick Spanheim, two learned professors of divinity. From Geneva he passed through France, and came home 5 after an absence of a year and three months. At his return he heard of the death of his friend Charles Diodati, a man whom it is reasonable to suppose of great merit, since he was thought by Milton worthy of a poem intituled 'Epitaphium Damonis,' written 10 with the common but childish imitation of pastoral life.

He now hired a lodging at the house of one Russel, a tailor in St Bride's Churchyard, and undertook the education of John and Edward Philips, his sister's 15 sons. Finding his rooms too little, he took a house and garden in Aldersgate Street—which was not then so much out of the world as it is now—and chose his dwelling at the upper end of a passage, that he might avoid the noise of the street. Here he received 20 more boys to be boarded and instructed.

Let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and small performance, on the man who hastens home because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, 25 and, when he reaches the scene of action, vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding-school. This is the period of his life from which all his biographers seem inclined to shrink. They are unwilling that Milton should be degraded to a schoolmaster. But 30 since it cannot be denied that he taught boys, one finds out that he taught for nothing, and another that

his motive was only zeal for the propagation of learning and virtue; and all tell what they do not know to be true, only to excuse an act which no wise man will consider as in itself disgraceful. His father was  
5 alive; his allowance was not ample; and he supplied its deficiencies by an honest and useful employment.

It is told that in the art of education he performed wonders; and a formidable list is given of the authors, Greek and Latin, that were read in Aldersgate Street  
10 by youth between ten and fifteen or sixteen years of age. Those who tell or receive these stories should consider, that nobody can be taught faster than he can learn. The speed of the horseman must be limited by the power of his horse. Every man that  
15 has ever undertaken to instruct others can tell what slow advances he has been able to make, and how much patience it requires to recall vagrant inattention, to stimulate sluggish indifference, and to rectify absurd misapprehension.

20 The purpose of Milton, as it seems, was to teach something more solid than the common literature of schools, by reading those authors that treat of physical subjects, such as the Georgic, and astronomical treatises of the ancients. This was a scheme of improvement which seems to have busied many literary  
25 projectors of that age. Cowley, who had more means than Milton of knowing what was wanting to the embellishments of life, formed the same plan of education in his imaginary college. But the truth is, that the  
30 knowledge of external nature, and the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind. Whether

we provide for action or conversation, whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind, and with those examples which may be said to embody truth, and prove by events the reasonableness of opinions. Prudence and Justice are virtues and excellences of all times and of all places; we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary, and at leisure. Physiological learning is of such rare emergence that one may know another half his life without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostatics or astronomy; but his moral and prudential character immediately appears. Those authors, therefore, are to be read at schools that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversation; and these purposes are best served by poets, orators, and historians.

Let me not be censured for this digression as pedantic or paradoxical, for if I have Milton against me, I have Socrates on my side. It was his labour to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life; but the innovators whom I oppose are turning off attention from life to nature. They seem to think that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the stars. Socrates was rather of opinion that what we had to learn was, how to do good and avoid evil.

Ὅτι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακὸν τ' ἀγαθὸν τε τέτυκται.

Of institutions we may judge by their effects. From this wonder-working academy I do not know that there ever proceeded any man very eminent for knowledge : its only genuine product, I believe, is a small History  
5 of Poetry, written in Latin by his nephew Philips, of which, perhaps, none of my readers has ever heard.

That in his school, as in everything else which he undertook, he laboured with great diligence, there is no reason for doubting. One part of his method de-  
10 serves general imitation. He was careful to instruct his scholars in religion. Every Sunday was spent upon theology, of which he dictated a short system, gathered from the writers that were then fashionable in the Dutch universities. He set his pupils an ex-  
15 ample of hard study and spare diet : only now and then he allowed himself to pass a day of festivity and indulgence with some gay gentlemen of Gray's Inn.

He now began to engage in the controversies of the times, and lent his breath to blow the flames of  
20 contention. In 1641 he published a treatise of reformation, in two books, against the Established Church, being willing to help the Puritans, who were, he says, *inferior to the Prelates in learning*. Hall, Bishop of Norwich, had published an 'Humble Re-  
25 monstrance' in defence of Episcopacy ; to which, in 1641, five ministers, of whose names the first letters made the celebrated word Smectymnuus, gave their answer. Of this answer a Confutation was attempted by the learned Usher ; and to the Confutation Milton  
30 published a Reply, intituled, 'Of Prelatical Episcopacy, and whether it may be deduced from the Apostolical Times, by virtue of those Testimonies



which are alleged to that purpose in some late Treatises, one whereof goes under the name of James, Lord Bishop of Armagh.'

I have transcribed this title to show, by his contemptuous mention of Usher, that he had now adopted 5 the puritanical savageness of manners. His next work was, 'The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy,' by Mr John Milton, 1642. In this book he discovers, not with ostentatious exultation, but with calm confidence, his high opinion of his own 10 powers, and promises to undertake something, he yet knows not what, that may be of use and honour to his country. "This," says he, "is not to be obtained but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and 15 sends out his seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, and insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs; till which in some measure 20 be compassed, I refuse not to sustain this expectation." From a promise like this, at once fervid, pious, and rational, might be expected the 'Paradise Lost.'

He published the same year two more pamphlets upon the same question. To one of his antagonists, 25 who affirms that he was *vomited out of the university*, he answers in general terms: "The fellows of the college wherein I spent some years, at my parting, after I had taken two degrees, as the manner is, signified many times how much better it would content 30 them that I should stay. As for the common approbation or dislike of that place as now it is, that I

should esteem or disesteem myself the more for that, too simple is the answerer if he think to obtain with me. Of small practice were the physician who could not judge, by what she and her sister have of long  
5 time vomited, that the worser stuff she strongly keeps in her stomach, but the better she is ever kecking at, and is queasy: she vomits now out of sickness; but before it be well with her she must vomit by strong physic. The university, in the time of her  
10 better health and my younger judgment, I never greatly admired, but now much less." This is surely the language of a man who thinks that he has been injured. He proceeds to describe the course of his conduct and the train of his thoughts; and, because  
15 he has been suspected of incontinence, gives an account of his own purity: "That if I be justly charged," says he, "with this crime, it may come upon me with tenfold shame."

The style of his piece is rough, and such perhaps  
20 was that of his antagonist. This roughness he justifies, by great examples, in a long digression. Sometimes he tries to be humorous: "Lest I should take him for some chaplain in hand, some squire of the body to his prelate, one who serves not at the altar only  
25 but at the court-cupboard, he will bestow on us a pretty model of himself, and sets me out half-a-dozen ptisical mottoes, wherever he had them, hopping short in the measure of convulsion fits; in which labour the agony of his wit having escaped narrowly,  
30 instead of well-sized periods, he greets us with a quantity of thumb-ring posies. And thus ends this section, or rather dissection, of himself." Such is the

controversial merriment of Milton ; his gloomy seriousness is yet more offensive. Such is his malignity, *that hell grows darker at his frown.*

His father, after Reading was taken by Essex, came to reside in his house, and his school increased. At 5  
Whitsuntide, in his thirty-fifth year, he married Mary, the daughter of Mr Powel, a justice of the peace in Oxfordshire. He brought her to town with him, and expected all the advantages of a conjugal life. The lady, however, seems not much to have delighted in 10  
the pleasures of spare diet and hard study ; for, as Philips relates, “having for a month led a philosophic life, after having been used at home to a great house and much company and joviality, her friends, possibly by her own desire, made earnest suit to have her com- 15  
pany the remaining part of the summer, which was granted upon a promise of her return at Michaelmas.”

Milton was too busy to much miss his wife. He pursued his studies, and now and then visited the Lady Margaret Leigh, whom he has mentioned in 20  
one of his sonnets. At last Michaelmas arrived ; but the lady had no inclination to return to the sullen gloom of her husband’s habitation, and therefore very willingly forgot her promise. He sent her a letter, but had no answer ; he sent more, with the same suc- 25  
cess. It could be alleged that letters miscarry : he therefore despatched a messenger, being by this time too angry to go himself. His messenger was sent back with some contempt. The family of the lady were Cavaliers. 30

In a man whose opinion of his own merit was like Milton’s, less provocation than this might have raised

violent resentment. Milton soon determined to repudiate her for disobedience ; and, being one of those who could easily find arguments to justify inclination, published (in 1644) 'The Doctrine and Discipline of  
5 Divorce,' which was followed by 'The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce,' and the next year his 'Tetrachordon, Expositions upon the four chief Places of Scripture which treat of Marriage.' This innovation was opposed, as might be expected,  
10 by the clergy, who, then holding their famous assembly at Westminster, procured that the author should be called before the Lords ; "but that House," says Wood, "whether approving the doctrine or not favouring his accusers, did soon dismiss him." There seems not to  
15 have been much written against him, nor anything by any writer of eminence. The antagonist that appeared is styled by him *A Serving-man turned Solicitor*. Howel, in his Letters, mentions the new doctrine with contempt ; and it was, I suppose, thought more worthy  
20 of derision than of confutation. He complains of this neglect in two sonnets, of which the first is contemptible and the second not excellent. From this time it is observed that he became an enemy to the Presbyterians, whom he had favoured before. He  
25 that changes his party by his humour is not more virtuous than he that changes it by his interest : he loves himself rather than truth.

His wife and her relations now found that Milton was not an unresisting sufferer of injuries ; and perceiving that he had begun to put his doctrine in  
30 practice by courting a young woman of great accomplishments—the daughter of one Doctor Davis, who

was however not ready to comply—they resolved to endeavour a reunion. He went sometimes to the house of one Blackborough, his relation, in the lane of St Martin's-le-Grand, and at one of his usual visits was surprised to see his wife come from another room, and implore forgiveness on her knees. He resisted her entreaties for a while; "but partly," says Philips, "his own generous nature, more inclinable to reconciliation than to perseverance in anger or revenge, and partly the strong intercession of friends on both sides, soon brought him to an act of oblivion and a firm league of peace." It were injurious to omit that Milton afterwards received her father and her brothers in his own house when they were distressed, with other Royalists.

He published about the same time his 'Areopagitica, a Speech' of Mr John Milton 'for the Liberty of unlicensed Printing.' The danger of such unbounded liberty, and the danger of bounding it, have produced a problem in the science of government which human understanding seems hitherto unable to solve. If nothing may be published but what civil authority shall have previously approved, power must always be the standard of truth; if every dreamer of innovations may propagate his projects, there can be no settlement; if every murmurer at government may diffuse discontent, there can be no peace; and if every sceptic in theology may teach his follies, there can be no religion. The remedy against these evils is to punish the authors; for it is yet allowed that every society may punish, though not prevent, the publication of opinions which that society shall think per-

nicious. But this punishment, though it may crush the author, promotes the book; and it seems not more reasonable to leave the right of printing unrestrained because writers may be afterwards censured, 5 than it would be to sleep with doors unbolted because by our laws we can hang a thief.

But whatever were his engagements, civil or domestic, poetry was never long out of his thoughts. About this time (1645) a collection of his Latin and English 10 poems appeared, in which the 'Allegro' and 'Penseroso,' with some others, were first published. He had taken a larger house in Barbican for the reception of scholars; but the numerous relations of his wife, to whom he generously granted refuge for a while, 15 occupied his rooms. In time, however, they went away; "and the house again," says Philips, "now looked like a house of the Muses only, though the accession of scholars was not great. Possibly his having proceeded so far in the education of youth 20 may have been the occasion of his adversaries calling him pedagogue and schoolmaster; whereas it is well known he never set up for a public school, to teach all the young fry of a parish, but only was willing to impart his learning and knowledge to relations and 25 the sons of gentlemen who were his intimate friends, and that neither his writings nor his way of teaching ever savoured in the least of pedantry."

Thus laboriously does his nephew extenuate what cannot be denied, and what might be confessed without disgrace. Milton was not a man who could be 30 come mean by a mean employment. This, however, his warmest friends seem not to have found. They

therefore shift and palliate. He did not sell literature to all comers at an open shop; he was a chamber-milliner, and measured his commodities only to his friends.

Philips, evidently impatient of viewing him in this state of degradation, tells us that it was not long continued; and, to raise his character again, has a mind to invest him with military splendour. "He is much mistaken," he says, "if there was not about this time a design of making him an adjutant-general in Sir William Waller's army. But the new modelling of the army proved an obstruction to the design." An event cannot be set at a much greater distance than by having been only *designed, about some time*, if a man *be not much mistaken*. Milton shall be a pedagogue no longer; for, if Philips be not much mistaken, somebody at some time designed him for a soldier.

About the time that the army was new-modelled (1645) he removed to a smaller house in Holborn, which opened backward into Lincoln's Inn Fields. He is not known to have published anything afterwards till the king's death, when, finding his murderers condemned by the Presbyterians, he wrote a treatise to justify it, and *to compose the minds of the people*. He made some remarks on the Articles of Peace between Ormond and the Irish Rebels. While he contented himself to write, he perhaps did only what his conscience dictated; and if he did not very vigilantly watch the influence of his own passions and the gradual prevalence of opinions, first willingly admitted and then habitually indulged,—if objections, by being overlooked, were forgotten, and desire superinduced

conviction,—he yet shared only the common weakness of mankind, and might be no less sincere than his opponents. But as faction seldom leaves a man honest, however it might find him, Milton is suspected of having interpolated the book called ‘Icon Basilike,’ which the Council of State, to whom he was now made Latin Secretary, employed him to censure, by inserting a prayer taken from Sidney’s ‘Arcadia’ and imputing it to the king, whom he charges, in his ‘Iconoclastes,’ with the use of this prayer as with a heavy crime, in the indecent language with which prosperity had emboldened the advocates for rebellion to insult all that is venerable or great: “Who would have imagined so little fear in him of the true all-seeing Deity, as, immediately before his death, to pop into the hands of the grave bishop that attended him, as a special relic of his saintly exercises, a prayer stolen word for word from the mouth of a heathen woman praying to a heathen God?”

The papers which the king gave to Dr Juxon on the scaffold the regicides took away, so that they were at least the publishers of this prayer; and Dr Birch, who had examined the question with great care, was inclined to think them the forgers. The use of it by adaptation was innocent; and they who could so noisily censure it, with a little extension of their malice could contrive what they wanted to accuse.

King Charles II. being now sheltered in Holland, employed Salmasius, professor of polite learning at Leyden, to write a defence of his father and of monarchy; and, to excite his industry, gave him, as was reported, a hundred Jacobuses. Salmasius was a



man of skill in languages, knowledge of antiquity, and sagacity of emendatory criticism almost exceeding all hope of human attainment; and having, by excessive praises, been confirmed in great confidence of himself, though he probably had not much considered the principles of society or the rights of government, undertook the employment without distrust of his own qualifications, and, as his expedition in writing was wonderful, in 1649 published 'Defensio Regis.' To this Milton was required to write a sufficient answer, which he performed (1651) in such a manner that Hobbes declared himself unable to decide whose language was best or whose arguments were worst. In my opinion Milton's periods are smoother, neater, and more pointed; but he delights himself with teasing his adversary as much as with confuting him. He makes a foolish allusion of Salmasius—whose doctrine he considers as servile and unmanly—to the stream of Salmacis, which, whoever entered, left half his virility behind him. Salmasius was a Frenchman, and was unhappily married to a scold. *Tu es Gallus*, says Milton, *et, ut aiunt, nimium gallinaceus*. But his supreme pleasure is to tax his adversary, so renowned for criticism, with vicious Latin. He opens his book with telling that he has used *Persona*, which, according to Milton, signifies only a *Mask*, in a sense not known to the Romans, by applying it as we apply *Person*. But as Nemesis is always on the watch, it is memorable that he has enforced the charge of a solecism by an expression in itself grossly solecistical, when for one of those supposed blunders he says, as Ker, and I think some one before him, has remarked, *propino te*

*grammatistis tuis* vapulandum. From *vapulo*, which has a passive sense, *vapulandus* can never be derived. No man forgets his original trade: the rights of nations and of kings sink into questions of grammar  
 5 if grammarians discuss them.

Milton, when he undertook this answer, was weak of body and dim of sight; but his will was forward, and what was wanting of health was supplied by zeal. He was rewarded with a thousand pounds, and his  
 10 book was much read; for paradox, recommended by spirit and elegance, easily gains attention; and he who told every man that he was equal to his king could hardly want an audience.

That the performance of Salmasius was not dispersed with equal rapidity, or read with equal eagerness, is very credible. He taught only the stale doctrine of authority and the unpleasing duty of submission; and he had been so long not only the monarch but the tyrant of literature, that almost all  
 20 mankind were delighted to find him defied and insulted by a new name, not yet considered as any one's rival. If Christina, as is said, commended the 'Defence of the People,' her purpose must be to torment Salmasius, who was then at her court; for neither her  
 25 civic station nor her natural character could dispose her to favour the doctrine, who was by birth a queen, and by temper despotic. That Salmasius was, from the appearance of Milton's book, treated with neglect, there is not much proof; but to a man so long accustomed to admiration, a little praise of his antagonist  
 30 would be sufficiently offensive, and might incline him to leave Sweden, from which, however, he was dis-

missed, not with any mark of contempt, but with a train of attendants scarce less than regal.

He prepared a reply, which, left as it was imperfect, was published by his son in the year of the Restoration. In the beginning, being probably most in pain for his Latinity, he endeavours to defend his use of the word *persona*; but, if I remember right, he misses a better authority than any that he has found, that of Juvenal in his fourth satire:—

“Quid agis cum dira et fœdior omni  
Crimine *persona* est?” 10

As Salmasius reproached Milton with losing his eyes in the quarrel, Milton delighted himself with the belief that he had shortened Salmasius's life, and both, perhaps, with more malignity than reason. Salmasius died at the Spa, September 3, 1653; and as controversialists are commonly said to be killed by their last dispute, Milton was flattered with the credit of destroying him. 15

Cromwell had now dismissed the parliament by the authority of which he had destroyed monarchy, and commenced monarch himself, under the title of Protector, but with kingly and more than kingly power. That his authority was lawful never was pretended: he himself founded his right only in necessity. But Milton, having now tasted the honey of public employment, would not return to hunger and philosophy, but, continuing to exercise his office under a manifest usurpation, betrayed to his power that liberty which he had defended. Nothing can be more just than that rebellion should end in slavery, that he who had 20 25 30

justified the murder of his king for some acts which to him seemed unlawful, should now sell his services and his flatteries to a tyrant, of whom it was evident that he could do nothing lawful.

5 He had now been blind for some years; but his vigour of intellect was such that he was not disabled to discharge his office of Latin secretary or continue his controversies. His mind was too eager to be diverted and too strong to be subdued.

10 About this time his first wife died in childbed, having left him three daughters. As he probably did not much love her, he did not long continue the appearance of lamenting her; but after a short time married Catharine, the daughter of one Captain  
15 Woodcock of Hackney, a woman doubtless educated in opinions like his own. She died, within a year, of childbirth, or some distemper that followed it, and her husband honoured her memory with a poor sonnet.

The first reply to Milton's '*Defensio Populi*' was  
20 published in 1651, called '*Apologia pro Rege et Populo Anglicano, contra Johannis Polypragmatici (alias Miltoni) Defensionem Destructivam Regis et Populi.*' Of this the author was not known; but Milton and his nephew Philips, under whose name  
25 he published an answer so much corrected by him that it might be called his own, imputed it to Bramhal; and, knowing him no friend to regicides, thought themselves at liberty to treat him as if they had known what they only suspected.

30 Next year appeared '*Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Cælum.*' Of this the author was Peter du Moulin, who was afterwards prebendary of Canterbury. But

Morus, or More, a French minister having the care of its publication, was treated as the writer by Milton in his 'Defensio Secunda,' and overwhelmed by such violence of invective that he began to shrink under the tempest, and gave his persecutors the means of knowing the true author. Du Moulin was now in great danger; but Milton's pride operated against his malignity, and both he and his friends were more willing that Du Moulin should escape than that he should be convicted of mistake. In this second Defence he shows that his eloquence is not merely satirical: the rudeness of his invective is equalled by the grossness of his flattery. "Deserimur, Cromuelle, tu solus superes, ad te summa nostrarum rerum rediit, in te solo consistit, insuperabili tuæ virtuti cedimus cuncti, nemine vel obloquente, nisi qui æquales inæqualis ipse honores sibi quærit, aut digniori concessos invidet, aut non intelligit nihil esse in societate hominum magis vel Deo gratum, vel rationi consentaneum, esse in civitate nihil æquius, nihil utilius, quam potiri rerum dignissimum. Eum te agnoscunt omnes, Cromuelle, ea tu civis maximus et gloriosissimus, dux publici consilii, exercituum fortissimorum imperator, pater patriæ gessisti. Sic tu spontanea bonorum omnium et animitus missa voce salutaris."

Cæsar, when he assumed the perpetual dictatorship, had not more servile or more elegant flattery. A translation may show its servility, but its elegance is less attainable. Having exposed the unskilfulness or selfishness of the former government, "We were left," says Milton, "to ourselves: the whole national interest fell into your hands, and subsists only in your

abilities. To your virtue, overpowering and resistless, every man gives way, except some who, without equal qualifications, aspire to equal honours, who envy the distinctions of merit greater than their own, or who  
 5 have yet to learn that in the coalition of human society nothing is more pleasing to God, or more agreeable to reason, than that the highest mind should have the sovereign power. Such, sir, are you by general confession; such are the things achieved by you, the  
 10 greatest and most glorious of our countrymen, the director of our public councils, the leader of unconquered armies, the father of your country; for by that title does every good man hail you with sincere and voluntary praise."

15 Next year, having defended all that wanted defence, he found leisure to defend himself. He undertook his own vindication against More, whom he declares in his title to be justly called the author of the '*Regii Sanguinis Clamor*.' In this there is no want of vehemence nor eloquence, nor does he forget his wonted  
 20 wit. "*Morus es? an Momus? an uterque idem est?*" He then remembers that *morus* is Latin for a mulberry-tree, and hints at the known transformation:—

25 "Poma alba ferebat  
 Quæ post nigra tulit Morus."

With this piece ended his controversies, and he from this time gave himself up to his private studies and his civil employment.

As secretary to the Protector he is supposed to have  
 30 written the Declaration of the reasons for a war with Spain. His agency was considered as of great import-

ance, for when a treaty with Sweden was artfully suspended, the delay was publicly imputed to Mr Milton's indisposition; and the Swedish agent was provoked to express his wonder that only one man in England could write Latin, and that man blind.

5

Being now forty-seven years old, and seeing himself disencumbered from external interruptions, he seems to have recollected his former purposes, and to have resumed three great works which he had planned for his future employment—an epic poem, the history of his country, and a dictionary of the Latin tongue.

10

To collect a dictionary seems a work of all others least practicable in a state of blindness, because it depends upon perpetual and minute inspection and collation. Nor would Milton probably have begun it after he had lost his eyes; but, having had it always before him, he continued it, says Philips, *almost to his dying day; but the papers were so discomposed and deficient, that they could not be fitted for the press.* The compilers of the Latin dictionary, printed at Cambridge, had the use of those collections in three folios, but what was their fate afterwards is not known.

15

20

To compile a history from various authors, when they can only be consulted by other eyes, is not easy, nor possible, but with more skilful and attentive help than can be commonly obtained; and it was probably the difficulty of consulting and comparing that stopped Milton's narrative at the Conquest, a period at which affairs were not yet very intricate nor authors very numerous.

25

30

For the subject of his epic poem, after much deliberation, *long choosing, and beginning late*, he fixed

upon 'Paradise Lost,' a design so comprehensive that it could be justified only by success. He had once designed to celebrate King Arthur, as he hints in his verses to Mansus; but *Arthur was reserved*, says  
 5 Fenton, *to another destiny*. It appears, by some sketches of poetical projects left in manuscript, and to be seen in a library at Cambridge, that he had digested his thoughts on this subject into one of those wild dramas which were anciently called Mysteries;  
 10 and Philips had seen what he terms part of a tragedy, beginning with the first ten lines of Satan's address to the Sun. These mysteries consist of allegorical persons, such as Justice, Mercy, Faith. Of the tragedy or mystery of 'Paradise Lost' there are two  
 15 plans:—

*The Persons.*

Michael.  
 Chorus of Angels.  
 Heavenly Love.  
 20 Lucifer.  
 Adam, } with the Serpent.  
 Eve, }  
 Conscience.  
 Death.  
 25 Labour, }  
 Sickness, } Mutes.  
 Discontent, }  
 Ignorance, }  
 with others, }  
 30 Faith.  
 Hope.  
 Charity.

*The Persons.*

Moses.  
 Divine Justice, Wisdom, Heavenly  
 Love.  
 The Evening Star, Hesperus.  
 Chorus of Angels.  
 Lucifer.  
 Adam.  
 Eve.  
 Conscience.  
 Labour, }  
 Sickness, } Mutes.  
 Discontent, }  
 Ignorance, }  
 Fear, }  
 Death, }  
 Faith.  
 Hope.  
 Charity.



## PARADISE LOST.

## THE PERSONS,

Moses, *προλογίζει*, recounting how he assumed his true body; that it corrupts not, because it is with God in the mount; declares the like of Enoch and Elijah; 5  
besides the purity of the place, that certain pure winds, dews, and clouds preserve it from corruption; whence exhorts to the sight of God; tells they cannot see Adam in the state of innocence by reason of their sin.

Justice, } debating what should become of man if he 10  
Mercy, } fall.  
Wisdom, }

Chorus of Angels singing a hymn of the Creation.

*Act II.*

Heavenly Love. 15

Evening Star.

Chorus sings the marriage-song, and describes Paradise.

*Act III.*

Lucifer contriving Adam's ruin.

Chorus fears for Adam, and relates Lucifer's rebellion 20  
and fall.

*Act IV.*

Adam, }  
Eve, } fallen.

Conscience cites them to God's examination. 25

Chorus bewails, and tells the good Adam has lost.

*Act V.*

Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise.

————— presented by an angel with

Labour, Grief, Hatred, Envy, War, Famine, }  
 5      Pestilence, Sickness, Discontent, Ignor- } Mutes.  
             ance, Fear, Death, }

To whom he gives their names.      Likewise Winter,  
             Heat, Tempest, &c.

Faith,

10 Hope, } comfort him and instruct him.  
       Charity, }

Chorus briefly concludes.

Such was his first design, which could have produced  
 only an allegory or mystery.      The following sketch

15 seems to have attained more maturity.

## ADAM UNPARADISED.

The angel Gabriel, either descending or entering ;  
 showing, since this globe was created, his frequency  
 as much on earth as in heaven ; describes Paradise.

20 Next the Chorus, showing the reason of his coming  
 to keep his watch in Paradise, after Lucifer's rebellion,  
 by command from God ; and withal expressing his  
 desire to see and know more concerning this excellent  
 new creature, man.      The angel Gabriel, as by his  
 25 name signifying a prince of power, tracing Paradise  
 with a more free office, passes by the station of the  
 Chorus, and, desired by them, relates what he knew  
 of man ; as the creation of Eve, with their love and

marriage. After this Lucifer appears ; after his overthrow, bemoans himself, seeks revenge on man. The Chorus prepare resistance at his first approach. At last, after discourse of enmity on either side, he departs : whereat the Chorus sings of the battle and victory in heaven against him and his accomplices : as before, after the first act, was sung a hymn of the creation. Here again may appear Lucifer, relating and insulting in what he had done to the destruction of man. Man next, and Eve having by this time been seduced by the serpent, appears confusedly covered with leaves. Conscience in a shape accuses him ; Justice cites him to the place whither Jehovah called for him. In the meanwhile the Chorus entertains the stage, and is informed by some angel the manner of the Fall. Here the Chorus bewails Adam's fall ; Adam then and Eve return ; accuse one another ; but especially Adam lays the blame to his wife ; is stubborn in his offence. Justice appears, reasons with him, convinces him. The Chorus admonisheth Adam, and bids him beware Lucifer's example of impenitence. The angel is sent to banish them out of Paradise ; but before causes to pass before his eyes, in shapes, a mask of all the evils of this life and world. He is humbled, relents, despairs ; at last appears Mercy, comforts him, promises the Messiah ; then calls in Faith, Hope, and Charity ; instructs him ; he repents, gives God the glory, submits to his penalty. The Chorus briefly concludes. Compare this with the former draught.

These are very imperfect rudiments of 'Paradise Lost' ; but it is pleasant to see great works in their

seminal state, pregnant with latent possibilities of excellence; nor could there be any more delightful entertainment than to trace their gradual growth and expansion, and to observe how they are sometimes suddenly advanced by accidental hints, and sometimes slowly improved by steady meditation.

Invention is almost the only literary labour which blindness cannot obstruct, and therefore he naturally solaced his solitude by the indulgence of his fancy and the melody of his numbers. He had done what he knew to be necessarily previous to poetical excellence; he had made himself acquainted with *seemly arts and affairs*; his comprehension was extended by various knowledge, and his memory stored with intellectual treasures. He was skilful in many languages, and had by reading and composition attained the full mastery of his own. He would have wanted little help from books had he retained the power of perusing them.

But while his greater designs were advancing—having now, like many other authors, caught the love of publication—he amused himself as he could with little productions. He sent to the press (1658) a manuscript of Raleigh called ‘The Cabinet Council’; and next year gratified his malevolence to the clergy by a ‘Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Cases, and the Means of removing Hirelings out of the Church.’

Oliver was now dead; Richard was constrained to resign. The system of extemporary government, which had been held together only by force, naturally fell into fragments when that force was taken away, and

Milton saw himself and his cause in equal danger. But he had still hope of doing something. He wrote letters, which Toland has published, to such men as he thought friends to the new commonwealth; and even in the year of the Restoration he *bated no jot of heart or hope*, but was fantastical enough to think that the nation, agitated as it was, might be settled by a pamphlet called 'A Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth,' which was, however, enough considered to be both seriously and ludicrously answered. 5 10

The obstinate enthusiasm of the commonwealth men was very remarkable. When the king was apparently returning, Harrington, with a few associates as fanatical as himself, used to meet, with all the gravity of political importance, to settle an equal government by rotation; and Milton, kicking when he could strike no longer, was foolish enough to publish, a few weeks before the Restoration, 'Notes upon a Sermon preached by one Griffiths, intituled "The Fear of God and the King."' To these Notes an answer was written by L'Estrange, in a pamphlet petulantly called 'No Blind Guides.' 15 20

But whatever Milton could write, or men of greater activity could do, the king was now about to be restored with the irresistible approbation of the people. He was therefore no longer secretary, and was consequently obliged to quit the house which he held by his office; and, proportioning his sense of danger to his opinion of the importance of his writings, thought it convenient to seek some shelter, and hid himself for a time in Bartholomew Close, by West Smithfield. 25 30

I cannot but remark a kind of respect perhaps unconsciously paid to this great man by his biographers: every house in which he resided is historically mentioned, as if it were an injury to neglect  
5 naming any place that he honoured by his presence.

The king, with lenity of which the world has had perhaps no other example, declined to be the judge or avenger of his own or his father's wrongs, and promised to admit into the Act of Oblivion all except  
10 those whom the Parliament should except; and the Parliament doomed none to capital punishment but the wretches who had immediately co-operated in the murder of the king. Milton was certainly not one of them: he had only justified what they had done.  
15 This justification was indeed sufficiently offensive; and (June 16) an order was issued to seize Milton's 'Defence' and Goodwin's 'Obstructors of Justice'—another book of the same tendency—and burn them by the common hangman. The attorney-general was  
20 ordered to prosecute the authors; but Milton was not seized, nor perhaps very diligently pursued.

Not long after (August 19), the flutter of innumerable bosoms was stilled by an act which the king, that his mercy might want no recommendation of  
25 elegance, rather called an Act of Oblivion than of Grace. Goodwin was named, with nineteen more, as incapacitated for any public trust; but of Milton there was no exception. Of this tenderness shown to Milton, the curiosity of mankind has not forborne  
30 to inquire the reason. Burnet thinks he was forgotten; but this is another instance which may confirm Dalrymple's observation, who says, "that when-

ever Burnet's narrations are examined, he appears to be mistaken."

Forgotten he was not; for his prosecution was ordered. It must be therefore by design that he was included in the general oblivion. He is said 5 to have had friends in the House—such as Marvel, Morrice, and Sir Thomas Clarges,—and undoubtedly a man like him must have had influence. A very particular story of his escape is told by Richardson in his Memoirs, which he received from Pope as 10 delivered by Betterton, who might have heard it from Davenant. In the war between the king and Parliament Davenant was made prisoner, and condemned to die; but was spared at the request of Milton. When the turn of success brought Milton into the 15 like danger, Davenant repaid the benefit by appearing in his favour. Here is a reciprocation of generosity and gratitude so pleasing, that the tale makes its own way to credit. But if help were wanted, I know not where to find it. The danger of Davenant 20 is certain from his own relation; but of his escape there is no account. Betterton's narration can be traced no higher; it is not known that he had it from Davenant. We are told that the benefit exchanged was life for life, but it seems not certain 25 that Milton's life ever was in danger. Goodwin, who had committed the same kind of crime, escaped with incapacitation; and, as exclusion from public trust is a punishment which the power of Government can commonly inflict without the help of a particular 30 law, it required no great interest to exempt Milton from a censure little more than verbal. Something

may be reasonably ascribed to veneration and compassion; to veneration of his abilities and compassion for his distresses, which made it fit to forgive his malice for his learning. He was now poor and  
5 blind; and who would pursue with violence an illustrious enemy depressed by fortune and disarmed by nature?

The publication of the 'Act of Oblivion' put him in the same condition with his fellow-subjects. He  
10 was, however, upon some pretence not now known, in the custody of the serjeant in December; and when he was released, upon his refusal of the fees demanded, he and the serjeant were called before the House. He was now safe within the shade of  
15 oblivion, and knew himself to be as much out of the power of a griping officer as any other man. How the question was determined is not known. Milton would hardly have contended, but that he knew himself to have right on his side.

20 He then removed to Jewin Street, near Aldersgate Street; and being blind, and by no means wealthy, wanted a domestic companion and attendant; and therefore, by the recommendation of Dr Paget, married Elizabeth Minshul, of a gentleman's family  
25 in Cheshire, probably without a fortune. Marriage afforded not much of his happiness. The first wife left him in disgust, and was brought back only by terror; the second, indeed, seems to have been more a favourite, but her life was short. The third, as  
30 Philips relates, oppressed his children in his lifetime, and cheated them at his death.

Soon after his marriage, according to an obscure



story, he was offered the continuance of his employment, and, being pressed by his wife to accept it, answered, "You, like other women, want to ride in your coach; my wish is to live and die an honest man." If he considered the Latin secretary as exercising any of the powers of Government, he that had shared authority either with the Parliament or Cromwell might have forborne to talk very loudly of his honesty; and if he thought the office purely ministerial, he certainly might have honestly retained it 5 under the king. But this tale has too little evidence to deserve a disquisition: large offers and sturdy rejections are among the most common topics of falsehood. 10

He had so much either of prudence or gratitude, 15 that he forbore to disturb the new settlement with any of his political or ecclesiastical opinions, and from this time devoted himself to poetry and literature. Of his zeal for learning in all its parts he gave a proof by publishing, the next year (1661), 'Accidence commenced Grammar,' a little book which 20 has nothing remarkable but that its author, who had been lately defending the supreme powers of his country and was then writing 'Paradise Lost,' could descend from his elevation to rescue children 25 from the perplexity of grammatical confusion and the trouble of lessons unnecessarily repeated.

About this time Elwood the quaker, being recommended to him as one who would read Latin to him for the advantage of his conversation, attended him 30 every afternoon except on Sundays. Milton, who, in his letter to Hartlib, had declared that *to read Latin*

- with an English mouth is as ill a hearing as Law French*, required that Elwood should learn and practise the Italian pronunciation, which, he said, was necessary if he would talk with foreigners. This  
5 seems to have been a task troublesome without use. There is little reason for preferring the Italian pronunciation to our own, except that it is more general; and to teach it to an Englishman is only to make him a foreigner at home. He who travels, if he speaks  
10 Latin, may so soon learn the sounds which every native gives it, that he need make no provision before his journey; and if strangers visit us, it is their business to practise such conformity to our modes as they expect from us in their own countries. Elwood complied with the directions, and improved himself by  
15 his attendance; for he relates that Milton, having a curious ear, knew by his voice when he read what he did not understand, and would stop him, and *open the most difficult passages*.
- 20 In a short time he took a house in the Artillery Walk, leading to Bunhill Fields, the mention of which concludes the register of Milton's removals and habitations. He lived longer in this place than in any other. He was now busied by 'Paradise Lost.' Whence he  
25 drew the original design has been variously conjectured by men who cannot bear to think themselves ignorant of that which, at last, neither diligence nor sagacity can discover. Some find the hint in an Italian tragedy. Voltaire tells a wild and unauthorised story of a farce  
30 seen by Milton in Italy, which opened thus: *Let the Rainbow be the Fiddlestick of the Fiddle of Heaven*. It has been already shown that the first conception

was a tragedy or mystery, not of a narrative, but a dramatic work, which he is supposed to have begun to reduce to its present form about the time (1655) when he finished his dispute with the defenders of the king.

He long before had promised to adorn his native country by some great performance, while he had yet perhaps no settled design, and was stimulated only by such expectations as naturally arose from the survey of his attainments and the consciousness of his powers. What he should undertake it was difficult to determine. He was *long choosing, and began late*. While he was obliged to divide his time between his private studies and affairs of state, his poetical labour must have been often interrupted; and perhaps he did little more in that busy time than construct the narrative, adjust the episodes, proportion the parts, accumulate images and sentiments, and treasure in his memory, or preserve in writing, such hints as books or meditation would supply. Nothing particular is known of his intellectual operations while he was a statesman; for, having every help and accommodation at hand, he had no need of uncommon expedients.

Being driven from all public stations, he is yet too great not to be traced by curiosity to his retirement, where he has been found by Mr Richardson, the fondest of his admirers, sitting *before his door in a grey coat of coarse cloth, in warm sultry weather, to enjoy the fresh air; and so, as well as in his own room, receiving the visits of people of distinguished parts as well as quality*. His visitors of high quality must now

be imagined to be few ; but men of parts might reasonably court the conversation of a man so generally illustrious that foreigners are reported by Wood to have visited the house in Bread Street where he  
5 was born. According to another account, he was seen in a small house, *neatly enough dressed in black clothes, sitting in a room hung with rusty green, pale but not cadaverous, with chalkstones in his hands. He said that if it were not for the gout, his blindness*  
10 *would be tolerable.* In the intervals of his pain, being made unable to use the common exercises, he used to swing in a chair, and sometimes played upon an organ.

He was now confessedly and visibly employed upon  
15 his poem, of which the progress might be noted by those with whom he was familiar ; for he was obliged, when he had composed as many lines as his memory would conveniently retain, to employ some friend in writing them, having, at least for part of the time, no  
20 regular attendant. This gave opportunity to observations and reports. Mr Philips observes that there was a very remarkable circumstance in the composure of 'Paradise Lost,' "which I have a particular reason," says he, "to remember ; for whereas I had the perusal  
25 of it from the very beginning for some years, as I went from time to time to visit him, in parcels of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time (which, being written by whatever hand came next, might possibly want correction as to the orthography and pointing), having,  
30 as the summer came on, not been showed any for a considerable while, and desiring the reason thereof, was answered that his vein never happily flowed but

from the autumnal equinox to the vernal; and that whatever he attempted at other times was never to his satisfaction, though he courted his fancy never so much,—so that, in all the years he was about this poem, he may be said to have spent half his time therein.” 5

Upon this relation Toland remarks that in his opinion Philips has mistaken the time of the year; for Milton, in his Elegies, declares that with the advance of the spring he feels the increase of his poetical force, *redeunt in carmina vires*. To this it is answered that Philips could hardly mistake time so well marked; and it may be added that Milton might find different times of the year favourable to different parts of life. Mr Richardson conceives it impossible that *such a work should be suspended for six months, or for one. It may go on faster or slower, but it must go on*. By what necessity it must continually go on, or why it might not be laid aside and resumed, it is not easy to discover. 15 20

This dependence of the soul upon the seasons, those temporary and periodical ebbs and flows of intellect, may, I suppose, justly be derided as the fumes of vain imagination. *Sapiens dominabitur astris*. The author that thinks himself weather-bound will find, with a little help from hellebore, that he is only idle or exhausted. But while this notion has possession of the head, it produces the inability which it supposes. Our powers owe much of their energy to our hopes; *possunt quia posse videntur*. When success seems attainable, diligence is enforced; but when it is admitted that the faculties are suppressed 25 30

by a cross wind or a cloudy sky, the day is given up without resistance; for who can contend with the course of nature?

From such prepossessions Milton seems not to  
5 have been free. There prevailed in his time an opinion that the world was in its decay, and that we have had the misfortune to be produced in the decrepitude of nature. It was suspected that the whole creation languished, that neither trees nor  
10 animals had the height or bulk of their predecessors, and that everything was daily sinking by gradual diminution. Milton appears to suspect that souls partake of the general degeneracy, and is not without some fear that his book is to be written in *an age too*  
15 *late* for heroic poesy.

Another opinion wanders about the world, and sometimes finds reception among wise men—an opinion that restrains the operations of the mind to particular regions, and supposes that a luckless mortal may be  
20 born in a degree of latitude too high or too low for wisdom or for wit. From this fancy, wild as it is, he had not wholly cleared his head when he feared lest the *climate* of his country might be *too cold* for flights of imagination. Into a mind already occupied by  
25 such fancies, another not more reasonable might easily find its way. He that could fear lest his genius had fallen upon too old a world or too chill a climate, might consistently magnify to himself the influence of the seasons, and believe his faculties to be vigorous  
30 only half the year.

His submission to the seasons was at least more reasonable than his dread of decaying nature or a

frigid zone ; for general causes must operate uniformly in a general abatement of mental power. If less could be performed by the writer, less likewise would content the judges of his work. Among this lagging race of frosty grovellers he might still have risen into eminence 5 by producing something which *they should not willingly let die*. However inferior to the heroes who were born in better ages, he might still be great among his contemporaries, with the hope of growing every day greater in the dwindle of posterity. He might still 10 be the giant of the pigmies, the one-eyed monarch of the blind.

Of his artifices of study or particular hours of composition we have little account, and there was perhaps little to be told. Richardson, who seems to 15 have been very diligent in his inquiries, but discovers always a wish to find Milton discriminated from other men, relates that "he would sometimes lie awake whole nights, but not a verse could he make ; and on a sudden his poetical faculty would rush upon him 20 with an *impetus* or *æstrum*, and his daughter was immediately called to secure what came. At other times he would dictate perhaps forty lines in a breath, and then reduce them to half the number."

These bursts of light and involutions of darkness, 25 these transient and involuntary excursions and retrocessions of invention, having some appearance of deviation from the common train of nature, are eagerly caught by the lovers of a wonder. Yet something of this inequality happens to every man in every 30 mode of exertion, manual or mental. The mechanic cannot handle his hammer and his file at all times

with equal dexterity: there are hours, he knows not why, when *his hand is out*. By Mr Richardson's relation, casually conveyed, much regard cannot be claimed. That in his intellectual hour Milton called  
 5 for his daughter *to secure what came* may be questioned; for unluckily it happens to be known that his daughters were never taught to write; nor would he have been obliged, as is universally confessed, to have employed any casual visitor in disburthening  
 10 his memory if his daughter could have performed the office.

The story of reducing his exuberance has been told of other authors, and, though doubtless true of every fertile and copious mind, seems to have been gratui-  
 15 tously transferred to Milton. What he has told us, and we cannot now know more, is, that he composed much of his poem in the night and morning,—I suppose before his mind was disturbed with common business,—and that he poured out with great fluency  
 20 his *unpremeditated verse*. Versification, free, like his, from the distresses of rhyme, must, by a work so long, be made prompt and habitual; and, when his thoughts were once adjusted, the words would come at his command.

25 At what particular times of his life the parts of his work were written cannot often be known. The beginning of the third book shows that he had lost his sight; and the introduction to the seventh, that the return of the king had clouded him with discountenance, and that he was offended by the licentious  
 30 festivity of the Restoration. There are no other internal notes of time. Milton, being now cleared



from all effects of his disloyalty, had nothing required from him but the common duty of living in quiet, to be rewarded with the common right of protection. But this, which, when he skulked from the approach of his king, was perhaps more than he hoped, seems 5 not to have satisfied him ; for no sooner is he safe than he finds himself in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, and with darkness and with danger compassed round*. This darkness, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion ; 10 but to add the mention of danger was ungrateful and unjust. He was fallen indeed on *evil days* ; the time was come in which regicides could no longer boast their wickedness. But of *evil tongues* for Milton to complain required impudence at least equal to his 15 other powers,—Milton, whose warmest advocates must allow that he never spared any asperity of reproach or brutality of insolence.

But the charge itself seems to be false ; for it would be hard to recollect any reproach cast upon him, either 20 serious or ludicrous, through the whole remaining part of his life. He pursued his studies or his amusements without persecution, molestation, or insult. Such is the reverence paid to great abilities, however misused ; they who contemplated in Milton the 25 scholar and the wit, were contented to forget the reviler of his king.

When the plague (1665) raged in London, Milton took refuge at Chalfont, in Bucks, where Elwood, who had taken the house for him, first saw a complete 30 copy of ‘Paradise Lost,’ and having perused it, said to him, “Thou hast said a great deal upon Paradise

Lost ; what hast thou to say upon Paradise Found ? ”  
Next year, when the danger of infection had ceased,  
he returned to Bunhill Fields, and designed the  
publication of his poem. A licence was necessary,  
5 and he could expect no great kindness from a chaplain  
of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He seems, however,  
to have been treated with tenderness ; for though  
objections were made to particular passages, and  
among them to the simile of the sun eclipsed in the  
10 first book, yet the licence was granted ; and he sold  
his copy, April 27, 1667, to Samuel Simmons for  
an immediate payment of five pounds, with a stipula-  
tion to receive five pounds more when thirteen  
hundred should be sold of the first edition : and  
15 again five pounds after the sale of the same num-  
ber of the second edition : and another five pounds  
after the same sale of the third. None of the three  
editions were to be extended beyond fifteen hundred  
copies.

20 The first edition was ten books, in a small quarto.  
The titles were varied from year to year ; and an  
advertisement and the arguments of the books were  
omitted in some copies and inserted in others. The  
sale gave him in two years a right to his second  
25 payment, for which the receipt was signed April 26,  
1669. The second edition was not given till 1674.  
It was printed in small octavo, and the number of  
books was increased to twelve by a division of the  
seventh and twelfth ; and some other small improve-  
30 ments were made. The third edition was published  
in 1678 ; and the widow, to whom the copy was then  
to devolve, sold all her claims to Simmons for eight

pounds, according to her receipt given December 21, 1680. Simmons had already agreed to transfer the whole right to Brabazon Aylmer for twenty-five pounds; and Aylmer sold to Jacob Tonson half, August 17, 1683, and half, March 24, 1690, at a price considerably enlarged. In the history of 'Paradise Lost,' a deduction thus minute will rather gratify than fatigue. 5

The slow sale and tardy reputation of this poem have been always mentioned as evidences of neglected merit, and of the uncertainty of literary fame; and inquiries have been made, and conjectures offered, about the causes of its long obscurity and late reception. But has the case been truly stated? Have not lamentation and wonder been lavished on an evil that was never felt? That in the reigns of Charles and James the 'Paradise Lost' received no public acclamations is readily confessed. Wit and literature were on the side of the court: and who that solicited favour or fashion would venture to praise the defender of the regicides? All that he himself could think his due, from *evil tongues* in *evil days*, was that reverential silence which was generously preserved. But it cannot be inferred that his poem was not read, or not, however unwillingly, admired. 10 15 20 25

The sale, if it be considered, will justify the public. Those who have no power to judge of past times but by their own, should always doubt their conclusions. The call for books was not in Milton's age what it is at present. To read was not then a general amusement: neither traders, nor often gentlemen, thought themselves disgraced by ignorance. The women had 30

not then aspired to literature, nor was every house supplied with a closet of knowledge. Those, indeed, who professed learning were not less learned than at any other time ; but of that middle race of students  
5 who read for pleasure or accomplishment, and who buy the numerous products of modern typography, the number was then comparatively small. To prove the paucity of readers, it may be sufficient to remark that the nation had been satisfied from 1623 to 1664—that  
10 is, forty-one years—with only two editions of the works of Shakespeare, which probably did not together make one thousand copies.

The sale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in opposition to so much recent enmity, and to a style of  
15 versification new to all and disgusting to many, was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius. The demand did not immediately increase ; for many more readers than were supplied at first the nation did not afford. Only three thousand were sold in eleven years ;  
20 for it forced its way without assistance. Its admirers did not dare to publish their opinion, and the opportunities now given of attracting notice by advertisements were then very few. The means of proclaiming the publication of new books have been produced by that  
25 general literature which now pervades the nation through all its ranks. But the reputation and price of the copy still advanced, till the Revolution put an end to the secrecy of love, and 'Paradise Lost' broke into open view with sufficient security of kind reception.

30 Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked his reputation stealing its way in a kind of

subterraneous current through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting without impatience the vicissitudes of opinion and the impartiality of a future generation. In the meantime he continued his studies, and supplied the want of sight by a very odd expedient, of which Philips gives the following account :—

Mr Philips tells us, "That though our author had 10  
daily about him one or other to read, some persons of man's estate, who, of their own accord, greedily caught at the opportunity of being his readers, that they might as well reap the benefit of what they read to him as oblige him by the benefit of their reading ; and others 15  
of younger years were sent by their parents to the same end ; yet excusing only the eldest daughter by reason of her bodily infirmity and difficult utterance of speech (which, to say truth, I doubt was the principal cause of excusing her), the other two were condemned to the 20  
performance of reading and exactly pronouncing of all the languages of whatever book he should, at one time or other, think fit to peruse—viz., the Hebrew (and I think the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, Spanish, and French. All which sorts of books to be 25  
confined to read, without understanding one word, must needs be a trial of patience almost beyond endurance. Yet it was endured by both for a long time, though the irksomeness of this employment could not be always concealed, but broke out more and more 30  
into expressions of uneasiness ; so that at length they were all, even the eldest also, sent out to learn some

curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture that are proper for women to learn, particularly embroideries in gold or silver."

5 In the scene of misery which this mode of intellectual labour sets before our eyes, it is hard to determine whether the daughters or the father are most to be lamented. A language not understood can never be so read as to give pleasure, and very seldom so as to convey meaning. If few men would have had resolution  
10 to write books with such embarrassments, few likewise would have wanted ability to find some better expedient.

Three years after his 'Paradise Lost' (1667) he published his 'History of England,' comprising the  
15 whole fable of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and continued to the Norman Invasion. Why he should have given the first part, which he seems not to believe, and which is universally rejected, it is difficult to conjecture. The style is harsh; but it has something of rough vigour,  
20 which perhaps may often strike, though it cannot please. On this history the licenser again fixed his claws, and before he would transmit it to the press tore out several parts. Some censures of the Saxon monks were taken away, lest they should be applied to the  
25 modern clergy; and a character of the Long Parliament and Assembly of Divines was excluded, of which the author gave a copy to the Earl of Anglesea, and which, being afterwards published, has been since inserted in its proper place.

30 The same year were printed 'Paradise Regained' and 'Samson Agonistes,' a tragedy written in imitation of the ancients, and never designed by the author

for the stage. As these poems were published by another bookseller, it has been asked whether Simmons was discouraged from receiving them by the slow sale of the former. Why a writer changed his bookseller a hundred years ago I am far from hoping to discover. 5  
 Certainly he who in two years sells thirteen hundred copies of a volume in quarto, bought for two payments of five pounds each, has no reason to repent his purchase. When Milton showed 'Paradise Regained' to Elwood, "This," said he, "is owing to you; for 10  
 you put it in my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which otherwise I had not thought of."

His last poetical offspring was his favourite. He could not, as Elwood relates, endure to hear 'Paradise Lost' preferred to 'Paradise Regained.' 15  
 Many causes may vitiate a writer's judgment of his own works. On that which has cost him much labour he sets a high value, because he is unwilling to think that he has been diligent in vain; what has been produced without toilsome efforts is considered 20  
 with delight, as a proof of vigorous faculties and fertile invention; and the last work, whatever it be, has necessarily most of the grace of novelty. Milton, however it happened, had this prejudice, and had it to himself. 25

To that multiplicity of attainments and extent of comprehension that entitle this great author to our veneration, may be added a kind of humble dignity, which did not disdain the meanest services to literature. The epic poet, the controvertist, the politician, 30  
 having already descended to accommodate children with a book of rudiments, now, in the last years of

his life, composed a book of logic for the initiation of students in philosophy; and published (1672) 'Artis Logicæ plenior Institutio ad Petri Rami methodum concinnata'—that is, 'A new Scheme of Logic, according to the method of Ramus.' I know not whether, even in this book, he did not intend an act of hostility against the universities, for Ramus was one of the first oppugners of the old philosophy, who disturbed with innovations the quiet of the schools.

His polemical disposition again revived. He had now been safe so long that he forgot his fears, and published a 'Treatise of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the best Means to prevent the Growth of Popery.' But this little tract is modestly written, with respectful mention of the Church of England, and an appeal to the Thirty-nine Articles. His principle of toleration is, agreement in the sufficiency of the Scriptures; and he extends it to all who, whatever their opinions are, profess to derive them from the sacred books. The Papists appeal to other testimonies, and are therefore, in his opinion, not to be permitted the liberty of either public or private worship; for though they plead conscience, *we have no warrant, he says, to regard conscience which is not grounded in Scripture.* Those who are not convinced by his reasons may be perhaps delighted with his wit. The term *Roman Catholic* is, he says, *one of the Pope's bulls; it is particular universal, or catholic schismatic.* He has, however, something better. As the best preservative against Popery, he recommends the diligent perusal of the



Scriptures, a duty from which he warns the busy part of mankind not to think themselves excused.

He now reprinted his juvenile poems, with some additions. In the last year of his life he sent to the press, seeming to take delight in publication, a 5 collection of 'Familiar Epistles in Latin'; to which, being too few to make a volume, he added some academical exercises, which perhaps he perused with pleasure, as they recalled to his memory the days of youth, but for which nothing but veneration for his 10 name could now procure a reader.

When he had attained his sixty-sixth year, the gout, with which he had been long tormented, prevailed over the enfeebled powers of nature. He died by a quiet and silent expiration, about the 10th of 15 November 1674, at his house in Bunhill Fields, and was buried next his father in the chancel of St Giles at Cripplegate. His funeral was very splendidly and numerously attended. Upon his grave there is supposed to have been no memorial; but in our time a 20 monument has been erected in Westminster Abbey, *To the Author of Paradise Lost*, by Mr Benson, who has in the inscription bestowed more words upon himself than upon Milton. When the inscription for the monument of Philips, in which he was said to be 25 *solus Miltono secundus*, was exhibited to Dr Sprat, then Dean of Westminster, he refused to admit it: the name of Milton was, in his opinion, too detestable to be read on the wall of a building dedicated to devotion. Atterbury, who succeeded him, being author of 30 the inscription, permitted its reception. "And such has been the change of public opinion," said Dr

Gregory, from whom I heard this account, "that I have seen erected in the church a statue of that man, whose name I once knew considered as a pollution of its walls."

5 Milton has the reputation of having been in his youth eminently beautiful, so as to have been called the Lady of his college. His hair, which was of a light brown, parted at the fore-top, and hung down upon his shoulders, according to the picture which he has  
10 given of Adam. He was, however, not of the heroic stature, but rather below the middle size, according to Mr Richardson, who mentions him as having narrowly escaped from being *short and thick*. He was vigorous and active, and delighted in the exercise of the sword,  
15 in which he is related to have been eminently skilful. His weapon was, I believe, not the rapier, but the back-sword, of which he recommends the use in his book on Education. His eyes are said never to have been bright; but, if he was a dexterous fencer, they  
20 must have been once quick.

His domestic habits, so far as they are known, were those of a severe student. He drank little strong drink of any kind, and fed without excess in quantity, and in his earlier years without delicacy of choice. In  
25 his youth he studied late at night; but afterwards changed his hours, and rested in bed from nine to four in the summer, and five in the winter. The course of his day was best known after he was blind. When he first rose he heard a chapter in the Hebrew  
30 Bible, and then studied till twelve; then took some exercise for an hour; then dined; then played on the organ, and sung, or heard another sing; then studied

to six ; then entertained his visitors till eight ; then  
 supped, and, after a pipe of tobacco and a glass of  
 water, went to bed. So is his life described ; but  
 this even tenor appears attainable only in colleges.  
 He that lives in the world will sometimes have the  
 succession of his practice broken and confused. Vis-  
 itors, of whom Milton is represented to have had great  
 numbers, will come and stay unseasonably ; business,  
 of which every man has some, must be done when  
 others will do it. When he did not care to rise early,  
 he had something read to him by his bedside : perhaps  
 at this time his daughters were employed. He com-  
 posed much in the morning, and dictated in the day,  
 sitting obliquely in an elbow-chair, with his leg thrown  
 over the arm.

Fortune appears not to have had much of his care.  
 In the civil wars he lent his personal estate to the  
 Parliament ; but when, after the contest was decided,  
 he solicited repayment, he met not only with neglect,  
 but *sharp rebuke* ; and, having tired both himself and  
 his friends, was given up to poverty and hopeless in-  
 dignation, till he showed how able he was to do greater  
 service. He was then made Latin secretary, with two  
 hundred pounds a-year ; and had a thousand pounds  
 for his ‘ Defence of the People.’ His widow, who, after  
 his death, retired to Nantwich in Cheshire, and died  
 about 1729, is said to have reported that he lost two  
 thousand pounds by entrusting it to a scrivener ; and  
 that, in the general depredation upon the Church, he  
 had grasped an estate of about sixty pounds a-year  
 belonging to Westminster Abbey, which, like other  
 sharers of the plunder of rebellion, he was afterwards

obliged to return. Two thousand pounds which he had placed in the Excise Office were also lost. There is yet no reason to believe that he was ever reduced to indigence. His wants, being few, were competently  
5 supplied. He sold his library before his death, and left his family fifteen hundred pounds, on which his widow laid hold, and only gave one hundred to each of his daughters.

His literature was unquestionably great. He read  
10 all the languages which are considered either as learned or polite,—Hebrew, with its two dialects, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish. In Latin his skill was such as places him in the first rank of writers and critics; and he appears to have cultivated Italian  
15 with uncommon diligence. The books in which his daughter, who used to read to him, represented him as most delighting, after Homer, which he could almost repeat, were Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Euripides*. His *Euripides* is, by Mr Cradock's kindness,  
20 now in my hands: the margin is sometimes noted, but I have found nothing remarkable.

Of the English poets he set most value upon Spenser, Shakespeare, and Cowley. Spenser was apparently his favourite; Shakespeare he may easily  
25 be supposed to like, with every other skilful reader; but I should not have expected that Cowley, whose ideas of excellence were different from his own, would have had much of his approbation. His character of Dryden, who sometimes visited him, was, that he was  
30 a good rhymist, but no poet.

His theological opinions are said to have been first Calvinistical, and afterwards—perhaps when he began

to hate the Presbyterians—to have tended towards Arminianism. In the mixed questions of theology and government he never thinks that he can recede far enough from popery or prelacy ; but what Baudius says of Erasmus seems applicable to him, *magis habuit quod fugeret, quam quod sequeretur*. He had determined rather what to condemn than what to approve. He has not associated himself with any denomination of Protestants : we know rather what he was not than what he was. He was not of the Church of Rome ; 10 he was not of the Church of England.

To be of no church is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are distant, and which is animated only by faith and hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unless it be invigorated and reimpresed by 15 external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had a full conviction of the truth of Christianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the profoundest veneration, to have been un- 20 tainted by an heretical peculiarity of opinion, and to have lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occasional agency of Providence, yet grew old without any visible worship. In the distribution of his hours there was no hour of prayer, either solitary 25 or with his household : omitting public prayers, he omitted all. Of this omission the reason has been sought upon a supposition which ought never to be made—that men live with their own approbation, and justify their conduct to themselves. Prayer certainly 30 was not thought superfluous by him who represents our first parents as praying acceptably in the state of

innocence, and efficaciously after their fall. That he lived without prayer can hardly be affirmed ; his studies and meditations were an habitual prayer. The neglect of it in his family was probably a fault for which  
5 he condemned himself, and which he intended to correct, but that death, as too often happens, intercepted his reformation.

His political notions were those of an acrimonious and surly republican, for which it is not known that  
10 he gave any better reason than that *a popular government was the most frugal ; for the trappings of a monarchy would set up an ordinary commonwealth.* It is surely very shallow policy that supposes money to be the chief good : and even this, without consider-  
15 ing that the support and expense of a court is, for the most part, only a particular kind of traffic, by which money is circulated, without any national impoverishment. Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatness  
20 and a sullen desire of independence ; in petulance impatient of control, and pride disdainful of superiority. He hated monarchs in the State and prelates in the Church ; for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It is to be suspected that his pre-  
25 dominant desire was to destroy rather than establish, and that he felt not so much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.

It has been observed that they who most loudly clamour for liberty do not most liberally grant it.  
30 What we know of Milton's character in domestic relations is, that he was severe and arbitrary. His family consisted of women ; and there appears in

his books something like a Turkish contempt of females, as subordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he suffered them to be depressed by a mean and penurious education. He thought woman made only 5 for obedience, and man only for rebellion.

Of his family some account may be expected. His sister, first married to Mr Philips, afterwards married Mr Agar, a friend of her first husband, who succeeded him in the Crown Office. She had, by her first 10 husband, Edward and John, the two nephews whom Milton educated; and by her second, two daughters. His brother, Sir Christopher, had two daughters, Mary and Catharine, and a son, Thomas, who succeeded Agar in the Crown Office, and left a daughter living 15 in 1749 in Grosvenor Street.

Milton had children only by his first wife—Anne, Mary, and Deborah. Anne, though deformed, married a master builder, and died of her first child. Mary died single. Deborah married Abraham Clark, a 20 weaver in Spitalfields, and lived seventy-six years, to August 1727. This is the daughter of whom public mention has been made. She could repeat the first lines of Homer, the Metamorphoses, and some of Euripides, by having often read them. Yet 25 here incredulity is ready to make a stand. Many repetitions are necessary to fix in the memory lines not understood; and why should Milton wish or want to hear them so often? These lines were at the beginning of the poems. Of a book written in 30 a language not understood, the beginning raises no more attention than the end; and as those that un-

derstand it know commonly the beginning best, its rehearsal will seldom be necessary. It is not likely that Milton required any passage to be so much repeated as that his daughter could learn it; nor likely  
5 that he desired the initial lines to be read at all; nor that the daughter, weary of the drudgery of pronouncing unideal sounds, would voluntarily commit them to memory.

To this gentlewoman Addison made a present, and  
10 promised some establishment, but died soon after. Queen Caroline sent her fifty guineas. She had seven sons and three daughters; but none of them had any children except her son Caleb and her daughter Elizabeth. Caleb went to Fort St George in the East  
15 Indies, and had two sons, of whom nothing is now known. Elizabeth married Thomas Foster, a weaver in Spitalfields, and had seven children, who all died. She kept a petty grocer's or chandler's shop, first at Holloway, and afterwards in Cock Lane, near Shore-  
20 ditch Church. She knew little of her grandfather, and that little was not good. She told of his harshness to his daughters, and his refusal to have them taught to write; and, in opposition to other accounts, represented him as delicate, though temperate, in his diet.

25 In 1750, April 5, 'Comus' was played for her benefit. She had so little acquaintance with diversion or gaiety, that she did not know what was intended when a benefit was offered her. The profits of the night were only one hundred and thirty pounds, though  
30 Dr Newton brought a large contribution, and twenty pounds were given by Tonson, a man who is to be praised as often as he is named. Of this sum one



hundred pounds was placed in the stocks—after some debate between her and her husband in whose name it should be entered—and the rest augmented their little stock, with which they removed to Islington. This was the greatest benefaction that ‘Paradise Lost’ ever procured the author’s descendants; and to this he who has now attempted to relate his Life had the honour of contributing a Prologue. 5

In the examination of Milton’s poetical works I shall pay so much regard to time as to begin with his juvenile productions. For his early pieces he seems to have had a degree of fondness not very laudable; what he has once written he resolves to preserve, and gives to the public an unfinished poem which he broke off because he was *nothing satisfied with what he had done*, supposing his readers less nice than himself. These preludes to his future labours are in Italian, Latin, and English. Of the Italian I cannot pretend to speak as a critic; but I have heard them commended by a man well qualified to decide their merit. The Latin pieces are lusciously elegant; but the delight which they afford is rather by the exquisite imitation of the ancient writers, by the purity of the diction, and the harmony of the numbers, than by any power of invention or vigour of sentiment. They are not all of equal value: the elegies excel the odes, and some of the exercises on Gunpowder Treason might have been spared. 10 15 20 25

The English poems, though they make no promises of ‘Paradise Lost,’ have this evidence of genius, that they have a cast original and unborrowed. But their 30

peculiarity is not excellence. If they differ from the verses of others, they differ for the worse, for they are too often distinguished by repulsive harshness. The combinations of words are new, but they are not pleasing; the rhymes and epithets seem to be laboriously sought and violently applied. That in the early parts of his life he wrote with much care appears from his manuscripts, happily preserved at Cambridge, in which many of his smaller works are found as they were first written, with the subsequent corrections. Such reliques show how excellence is acquired; what we hope ever to do with ease, we must learn first to do with diligence.

Those who admire the beauties of this great poet sometimes force their own judgment into false approbation of his little pieces, and prevail upon themselves to think that admirable which is only singular. All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace; he overlooked the milder excellence of suavity and softness; he was a *Lion* that had no skill in *dandling the Kid*.

One of the poems on which much praise has been bestowed is 'Lycidas,' of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing. What beauty there is we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of rough *satyrs* and *fauns with cloven heel*. Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.

In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth ; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral,—easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting. Whatever images it can supply are long ago exhausted, and its inherent improbability 5 always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labours and the partner of his discoveries ; but what image of tenderness can be excited 10 by these lines?—

“ We drove afield, and both together heard  
 What time the grey fly winds her sultry horn,  
 Battering our flocks with the fresh dews of night.”

We know that they never drove afield, and that they 15 had no flocks to batten ; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found.

Among the flocks, and copses, and flowers appear 20 the heathen deities—Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed 25 his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping ; and how one god asks another god what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy ; he who thus praises will confer no honour. 30

This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these

trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverend combinations. The shepherd likewise is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical  
5 pastor, a superintendent of a Christian flock. Such equivocations are always unskilful; but here they are indecent, and at least approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conscious. Such is the power of reputation justly ac-  
10 quired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read 'Lycidas' with pleasure, had he not known its author.

Of the two pieces, 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,'  
15 I believe opinion is uniform: every man that reads them reads them with pleasure. The author's design is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to show how objects derive their colours from the mind by representing the operation of the same things upon  
20 the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the same man as he is differently disposed, but rather how, among the successive variety of appearances, every disposition of mind takes hold on those by which it may be gratified.

25 The *cheerful* man hears the lark in the morning; the *pensive* man hears the nightingale in the evening. The *cheerful* man sees the cock strut, and hears the horn and hounds echo in the wood; then walks, *not unseen*, to observe the glory of the rising sun, or listen  
30 to the singing milkmaid, and view the labours of the ploughman and the mower; then casts his eyes about him over scenes of smiling plenty, and looks up to

the distant tower, the residence of some fair inhabitant. Thus he pursues rural gaiety through a day of labour or of play, and delights himself at night with the fanciful narratives of superstitious ignorance.

The *pensive* man, at one time, walks *unseen* to muse 5  
at midnight; and at another hears the sullen curfew. If the weather drives him home, he sits in a room lighted only by *glowing embers*, or by a lonely lamp outwatches the North Star to discover the habitation of separate souls, and varies the shades of meditation 10  
by contemplating the magnificent or pathetic scenes of tragic and epic poetry. When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he walks into the dark trackless woods, falls asleep by some murmuring water, and with melancholy enthusiasm ex- 15  
pects some dream of prognostication, or some music played by aerial performers.

Both Mirth and Melancholy are solitary, silent inhabitants of the breast, that neither receive nor transmit communication; no mention is therefore 20  
made of a philosophical friend or a pleasant companion. The seriousness does not arise from any participation of calamity, nor the gaiety from the pleasures of the bottle.

The man of *cheerfulness*, having exhausted the 25  
country, tries what *towered cities* will afford, and mingles with scenes of splendour, gay assemblies, and nuptial festivities; but he mingles a mere spectator, as, when the learned comedies of Jonson or the wild dramas of Shakespeare are exhibited, he at- 30  
tends the theatre. The *pensive* man never loses himself in crowds, but walks the cloister or frequents the

cathedral. Milton probably had not yet forsaken the church.

Both his characters delight in music ; but he seems to think that cheerful notes would have obtained from  
5 Pluto a complete dismissal of Eurydice, of whom solemn sounds procured only a conditional release. For the old age of Cheerfulness he makes no provision, but Melancholy he conducts with great dignity to the close of life. His Cheerfulness is without  
10 levity, and his Pensiveness without asperity.

Through these two poems the images are properly selected and nicely distinguished ; but the colours of the diction seem not sufficiently discriminated. I know not whether the characters are kept sufficiently  
15 apart. No mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy ; but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination.

The greatest of his juvenile performances is the  
20 Masque of 'Comus,' in which may very plainly be discovered the dawn or twilight of 'Paradise Lost.' Milton appears to have formed very early that system of diction and mode of verse which his maturer judgment approved, and from which he never endeav-  
25 oured nor desired to deviate.

Nor does 'Comus' afford only a specimen of his language ; it exhibits likewise his power of description and his vigour of sentiment employed in the praise and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical  
30 is rarely found ; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets embellish almost every period with lavish decoration. As a series of lines, therefore, it may be

considered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it.

As a drama it is deficient: the action is not probable. A masque, in those parts where supernatural intervention is admitted, must indeed be given up to all the freaks of imagination; but, so far as the action is merely human, it ought to be reasonable, which can hardly be said of the conduct of the two brothers, who, when their sister sinks with fatigue in a pathless wilderness, wander both away together in search of berries too far to find their way back, and leave a helpless lady to all the sadness and danger of solitude. This, however, is a defect overbalanced by its convenience.

What deserves more reprehension is, that the prologue spoken in the wild wood by the attendant Spirit is addressed to the audience,—a mode of communication so contrary to the nature of dramatic representation that no precedents can support it. The discourse of the Spirit is too long—an objection that may be made to almost all the following speeches. They have not the sprightliness of a dialogue animated by reciprocal contention, but seem rather declamations deliberately composed, and formally repeated, on a moral question. The auditor therefore listens as to a lecture, without passion, without anxiety.

The song of Comus has airiness and jollity; but, what may recommend Milton's morals as well as his poetry, the invitations to pleasure are so general that they excite no distinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy. The following soliloquies of Comus and the Lady are

elegant but tedious. The song must owe much to the voice if it ever can delight. At last the Brothers enter with too much tranquillity; and, when they have feared lest their sister should be in danger, and hoped  
5 that she is not in danger, the elder makes a speech in praise of chastity, and the younger finds how fine it is to be a philosopher. Then descends the Spirit in form of a shepherd; and the Brother, instead of being in haste to ask his help, praises his singing, and  
10 inquires his business in that place. It is remarkable that at this interview the Brother is taken with a short fit of rhyming. The Spirit relates that the Lady is in the power of Comus; the Brother moralises again; and the Spirit makes a long narration, of no use  
15 because it is false, and therefore unsuitable to a good being. In all these parts the language is poetical, and the sentiments are generous; but there is something wanting to allure attention.

The dispute between the Lady and Comus is the  
20 most animated and affecting scene of the drama, and wants nothing but a brisker reciprocation of objections and replies to invite attention and detain it. The songs are vigorous and full of imagery; but they are harsh in their diction, and not very musical in their  
25 numbers. Throughout the whole the figures are too bold, and the language too luxuriant for dialogue. It is a drama in the epic style, inelegantly splendid, and tediously instructive.

The Sonnets were written in different parts of  
30 Milton's life, upon different occasions. They deserve not any particular criticism, for of the best it can only be said that they are not bad; and perhaps only the



eighth and the twenty-first are truly entitled to this slender commendation. The fabric of a sonnet, however adapted to the Italian language, has never succeeded in ours, which, having greater variety of termination, requires the rhymes to be often changed. 5

Those little pieces may be despatched without much anxiety; a greater work calls for greater care. I am now to examine 'Paradise Lost,' a poem which, considered with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance the second, 10 among the productions of the human mind.

By the general consent of critics the first praise of genius is due to the writer of an epic poem, as it requires an assemblage of all the powers which are singly sufficient for other compositions. Poetry is the 15 art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to the help of reason. Epic poetry undertakes to teach the most important truths by the most pleasing precepts, and therefore relates some great event in the most affecting manner. History must supply the 20 writer with the rudiments of narration, which he must improve and exalt by a nobler art, must animate by dramatic energy, and diversify by retrospection and anticipation; morality must teach him the exact bounds and different shades of vice and virtue; from 25 policy and the practice of life he has to learn the discriminations of character and the tendency of the passions, either single or combined; and physiology must supply him with illustrations and images. To put these materials to poetical use, is required an 30 imagination capable of painting nature and realising fiction. Nor is he yet a poet till he has attained the

whole extension of his language, distinguished all the delicacies of phrase, and all the colours of words, and learned to adjust their different sounds to all the varieties of metrical modulation.

5 Bossu is of opinion that the poet's first work is to find a *moral* which his fable is afterwards to illustrate and establish. This seems to have been the process only of Milton. The moral of other poems is incidental and consequent; in Milton's only it is essential  
10 and intrinsic. His purpose was the most useful and the most arduous; *to vindicate the ways of God to man*; to show the reasonableness of religion, and the necessity of obedience to the Divine Law. To convey this moral there must be a *fable*, a narration artfully  
15 constructed, so as to excite curiosity and surprise expectation. In this part of his work Milton must be confessed to have equalled every other poet. He has involved in his account of the Fall of Man the events which preceded and those that were to follow it: he  
20 has interwoven the whole system of theology with such propriety that every part appears to be necessary; and scarcely any recital is wished shorter for the sake of quickening the progress of the main action.

✓ The subject of an epic poem is naturally an event  
25 of great importance. That of Milton is not the destruction of a city, the conduct of a colony, or the foundation of an empire. His subject is the fate of worlds, the revolutions of heaven and of earth; rebellion against the Supreme King, raised by the highest  
30 order of created beings; the overthrow of their host, and the punishment of their crime; the creation of a new race of reasonable creatures; their original happi-

ness and innocence, their forfeiture of immortality, and their restoration to hope and peace.

Great events can be hastened or retarded only by persons of elevated dignity. Before the greatness displayed in Milton's poem all other greatness shrinks 5 away. The weakest of his agents are the highest and noblest of human beings, the original parents of mankind ; with whose actions the elements consented ; on whose rectitude, or deviation of will, depended the state of terrestrial nature, and the condition of all the 10 future inhabitants of the globe.

Of the other agents in the poem, the chief are such as it is irreverence to name on slight occasions. The rest were lower powers—

“Of which the least could wield  
Those elements, and arm him with the force  
Of all their regions,”—

15

powers which only the control of Omnipotence restrains from laying creation waste, and filling the vast expanse of space with ruin and confusion. To display the mo- 20 tives and actions of beings thus superior, so far as human reason can examine them or human imagination represent them, is the task which this mighty poet has undertaken and performed.

In the examination of epic poems much speculation 25 is commonly employed upon the *characters*. The characters in the ‘Paradise Lost’ which admit of examination are those of angels and of man ; of angels good and evil ; of man in his innocent and sinful state.

Among the angels, the virtue of Raphael is mild 30 and placid, of easy condescension and free communica-

tion ; that of Michael is regal and lofty, and, as may seem, attentive to the dignity of his own nature. Abdiel and Gabriel appear occasionally, and act as every incident requires. The solitary fidelity of Abdiel  
5 is very amiably painted.

Of the evil angels the characters are more diversified. To Satan, as Addison observes, such sentiments are given as suit *the most exalted and most depraved being*. Milton has been censured by Clarke<sup>1</sup> for the impiety  
10 which sometimes breaks from Satan's mouth ; for there are thoughts, as he justly remarks, which no observation of character can justify, because no good man would willingly permit them to pass, however transiently, through his own mind. To make Satan speak as a  
15 rebel, without any such expressions as might taint the reader's imagination, was indeed one of the great difficulties in Milton's undertaking, and I cannot but think that he has extricated himself with great happiness. There is in Satan's speeches little that can give  
20 pain to a pious ear. (The language of rebellion cannot be the same with that of obedience. The malignity of Satan foams in haughtiness and obstinacy ; but his expressions are commonly general, and no otherwise  
.. offensive than as they are wicked.)

25 The other chiefs of the celestial rebellion are very judiciously discriminated in the first and second books ; and the ferocious character of Moloch appears, both in the battle and the council, with exact consistency.

To Adam and to Eve are given, during their innocence, such sentiments as innocence can generate and  
30 utter. Their love is pure benevolence and mutual

<sup>1</sup> Essay on Study.

veneration ; their repasts are without luxury, and their diligence without toil. Their addresses to their Maker have little more than the voice of admiration and gratitude. Fruition left them nothing to ask, and innocence left them nothing to fear. But with guilt enter 5 distrust and discord, mutual accusation, and stubborn self-defence ; they regard each other with alienated minds, and dread their Creator as the avenger of their transgression. At last they seek shelter in his mercy, soften to repentance, and melt in supplication. 10 Both before and after the Fall the superiority of Adam is diligently sustained.

Of the *probable* and the *marvellous*—two parts of a vulgar epic poem which immerse the critic in deep consideration—the ‘Paradise Lost’ requires little to 15 be said. It contains the history of a miracle, of creation and redemption ; it displays the power and the mercy of the Supreme Being. The probable, therefore, is marvellous, and the marvellous is probable. The substance of the narrative is truth ; and as truth allows 20 no choice, it is, like necessity, superior to rule. To the accidental or adventitious parts, as to everything human, some slight exceptions may be made. But the main fabric is immovably supported.

It is justly remarked by Addison that this poem 25 has, by the nature of its subject, the advantage above all others, that it is universally and perpetually interesting. All mankind will, through all ages, bear the same relation to Adam and to Eve, and must partake of that good and evil which extend to themselves. 30

Of the *machinery*, so called from Θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, by which is meant the occasional interposition of

supernatural power, another fertile topic of critical remarks, here is no room to speak, because everything is done under the immediate and visible direction of Heaven ; but the rule is so far observed, that no part  
5 of the action could have been accomplished by any other means.

Of *episodes*, I think there are only two, contained in Raphael's relation of the war in heaven, and Michael's prophetic account of the changes to happen in this  
10 world. Both are closely connected with the great action : one was necessary to Adam as a warning, the other as a consolation.

To the completeness or *integrity* of the design nothing can be objected : it has distinctly and clearly  
15 what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end. There is perhaps no poem of the same length from which so little can be taken without apparent mutilation. Here are no funeral games, nor is there any long description of a shield. The short digressions  
20 at the beginning of the third, seventh, and ninth books might doubtless be spared ; but superfluities so beautiful who would take away ? or who does not wish that the author of the 'Iliad' had gratified succeeding ages with a little knowledge of himself ? Perhaps no pas-  
25 sages are more frequently or more attentively read than those extrinsic paragraphs ; and, since the end of poetry is pleasure, that cannot be unpoetical with which all are pleased.

The questions, whether the action of the poem be  
30 strictly *one*, whether the poem can be properly termed *heroic*, and who is the hero, are raised by such readers as draw their principles of judgment rather from books

than from reason. Milton, though he intituled 'Paradise Lost' only a *poem*, yet calls it himself *heroic song*. Dryden, petulantly and indecently, denies the heroism of Adam because he was overcome; but there is no reason why the hero should not be unfortunate, except 5 established practice, since success and virtue do not go necessarily together. Cato is the hero of Lucan; but Lucan's authority will not be suffered by Quintilian to decide. However, if success be necessary, Adam's 10 deceiver was at last crushed; Adam was restored to his Maker's favour, and therefore may securely resume his human rank.

After the scheme and fabric of the poem must be considered its component parts, the sentiments and the diction. 15

The *sentiments*, as expressive of manners or appropriated to characters, are for the greater part unexceptionably just. Splendid passages, containing lessons of morality or precepts of prudence, occur seldom. Such is the original formation of this poem, that, as it 20 admits no human manners till the Fall, it can give little assistance to human conduct. Its end is to raise the thoughts above sublunary cares or pleasures. Yet the praise of that fortitude with which Abdiel maintained his singularity of virtue against the scorn of multitudes, 25 may be accommodated to all times; and Raphael's reproof of Adam's curiosity after the planetary motions, with the answer returned by Adam, may be confidently opposed to any rule of life which any poet has delivered. 30

The thoughts which are occasionally called forth in the progress are such as could only be produced by an

imagination in the highest degree fervid and active, to which materials were supplied by incessant study and unlimited curiosity. The heat of Milton's mind might be said to sublimate his learning, to throw off into his  
5 work the spirit of science, unmingled with its grosser parts. He had considered creation in its whole extent, and his descriptions are therefore learned. He had accustomed his imagination to unrestrained indulgence, and his conceptions therefore were extensive. The  
10 characteristic quality of his poem is sublimity. He sometimes descends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace, but his natural port is gigantic loftiness.<sup>1</sup> He can please when pleasure is required, but it is his  
15 peculiar power to astonish.

He seems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others, —the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the  
20 splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful. He therefore chose a subject on which too much could not be said, on which he might tire his fancy without the censure of extravagance.

25 The appearances of nature and the occurrences of life did not satiate his appetite of greatness. To paint things as they are requires a minute attention, and employs the memory rather than the fancy. Milton's  
30 { delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility ; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind. He sent his faculties out upon discovery, into worlds where

<sup>1</sup> Algarotti terms it *gigantesca sublimità Miltoniana*.



only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence and furnish sentiment and action to superior beings, to trace the counsels of hell or accompany the choirs of heaven.

But he could not be always in other worlds; he 5  
must sometimes revisit earth, and tell of things visible  
and known. When he cannot raise wonder by the ✓  
sublimity of his mind, he gives delight by its fertility.  
Whatever be his subject, he never fails to fill the  
imagination. But his images and descriptions of the 10  
scenes or operations of nature do not seem to be  
always copied from original form, nor to have the  
freshness, raciness, and energy of immediate observa-  
tion. He saw nature, as Dryden expresses it, *through* ✓  
*the spectacles of books*, and on most occasions calls 15  
learning to his assistance. The garden of Eden brings  
to his mind the vale of Enna, where Proserpine was  
gathering flowers. Satan makes his way through  
fighting elements, like Argo between the Cyanean  
rocks, or Ulysses between the two Sicilian whirlpools 20  
when he shunned Charybdis on the larboard. The  
mythological allusions have been justly censured as  
not being always used with notice of their vanity; but  
they contribute variety to the narration, and produce  
an alternate exercise of the memory and the fancy. 25

His similes are less numerous and more various  
than those of his predecessors. But he does not con-  
fine himself within the limits of rigorous comparison:  
his great excellence is amplitude, and he expands the  
adventitious image beyond the dimensions which the 30  
occasion required. Thus comparing the shield of  
Satan to the orb of the Moon, he crowds the imagina-

tion with the discovery of the telescope, and all the wonders which the telescope discovers.

Of his moral sentiments it is hardly praise to affirm that they excel those of all other poets. For this  
5 superiority he was indebted to his acquaintance with the sacred writings. The ancient epic poets, wanting the light of Revelation, were very unskilful teachers of virtue; their principal characters may be great, but they are not amiable. The reader may rise from their  
10 works with a greater degree of active or passive fortitude, and sometimes of prudence; but he will be able to carry away few precepts of justice, and none of mercy. From the Italian writers it appears that the advantages of even Christian knowledge may be  
15 possessed in vain. Ariosto's pravity is generally known; and though the 'Deliverance of Jerusalem' may be considered as a sacred subject, the poet has been very sparing of moral instruction. In Milton,  
every line breathes sanctity of thought and purity of  
20 manners, except when the train of the narration requires the introduction of the rebellious spirits; and even they are compelled to acknowledge their subjection to God in such a manner as excites reverence and confirms piety.

25 Of human beings there are but two; but those two are the parents of mankind, venerable before their fall for dignity and innocence, and amiable after it for repentance and submission. In their first state their affection is tender without weakness, and their piety  
30 sublime without presumption. When they have sinned, they show how discord begins in mutual frailty, and how it ought to cease in mutual forbearance; how

confidence of the divine favour is forfeited by sin, and how hope of pardon may be obtained by penitence and prayer. A state of innocence we can only conceive, if indeed, in our present misery, it be possible to conceive it; but the sentiments and worship proper to a fallen and offending being we have all to learn, as we have all to practise. 5

The poet, whatever be done, is always great. Our progenitors in their first state conversed with angels; even when folly and sin had degraded them, they had not in their humiliation *the port of mean suitors*; and they rise again to reverential regard when we find that their prayers were heard. 10

As human passions did not enter the world before the Fall, there is in the 'Paradise Lost' little opportunity for the pathetic; but what little there is has not been lost. That passion which is peculiar to rational nature, the anguish arising from the consciousness of transgression and the horrors attending the sense of the Divine displeasure, are very justly described and forcibly impressed. But the passions are moved only on one occasion. Sublimity is the general and prevailing quality in this poem—sublimity variously modified, sometimes descriptive, sometimes argumentative. 15 20

The defects and faults of 'Paradise Lost'—for faults and defects every work of man must have—it is the business of impartial criticism to discover. As in displaying the excellence of Milton I have not made long quotations, because of selecting beauties there had been no end, I shall in the same general manner mention that which seems to deserve censure; for what Englishman can take delight in transcribing 25 30

passages which, if they lessen the reputation of Milton, diminish in some degree the honour of our country?

The generality of my scheme does not admit the frequent notice of verbal inaccuracies, which Bentley, perhaps better skilled in grammar than in poetry, has often found, though he sometimes made them, and which he imputed to the obtrusions of a reviser whom the author's blindness obliged him to employ — a supposition rash and groundless if he thought it true, and vile and pernicious if, as is said, he in private allowed it to be false.

The plan of 'Paradise Lost' has this inconvenience, that it comprises neither human actions nor human manners. The man and woman who act and suffer are in a state which no other man or woman can ever know. The reader finds no transaction in which he can be engaged; beholds no condition in which he can by any effort of imagination place himself. He has therefore little natural curiosity or sympathy. We all, indeed, feel the effects of Adam's disobedience; we all sin like Adam, and, like him, must all bewail our offences. We have restless and insidious enemies in the fallen angels, and in the blessed spirits we have guardians and friends. In the redemption of mankind we hope to be included; in the description of heaven and hell we are surely interested, as we are all to reside hereafter either in the regions of horror or bliss. But these truths are too important to be new. They have been taught to our infancy, they have mingled with our solitary thoughts and familiar conversation, and are habitually interwoven with the whole texture of life. Being therefore not new, they raise no un-

accustomed emotion in the mind. What we knew before, we cannot learn; what is not unexpected, cannot surprise.

Of the ideas suggested by these awful scenes, from some we recede with reverence, except when stated 5 hours require their association; and from others we shrink with horror, or admit them only as salutary infictions, as counterpoises to our interests and passions. Such images rather obstruct the career of fancy than incite it. Pleasure and terror are indeed the genuine 10 sources of poetry; but poetical pleasure must be such as human imagination can at least conceive, and poetical terrors such as human strength and fortitude may combat. The good and evil of eternity are too ponderous for the wings of wit; the mind sinks under 15 them in passive helplessness, content with calm belief and humble adoration.

Known truths, however, may take a different appearance, and be conveyed to the mind by a new train of intermediate images. This Milton has undertaken, and 20 performed with pregnancy and vigour of mind peculiar to himself. Whoever considers the few radical positions which the Scriptures afforded him, will wonder by what energetic operation he expanded them to such extent and ramified them to so much variety, restrained 25 as he was by religious reverence from licentiousness of fiction. Here is a full display of the united force of study and genius, of a great accumulation of materials, with judgment to digest and fancy to combine them. Milton was able to select from nature or from story, 30 from ancient fable or from modern science, whatever could illustrate or adorn his thoughts. An

accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind, fermented by study and exalted by imagination. It has been therefore said, without an indecent hyperbole, by one of his encomiasts, that in reading 'Paradise  
5 Lost' we read a book of universal knowledge.

But original deficiency cannot be supplied. The want of human interest is always felt. 'Paradise  
7 Lost' is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down and forgets to take up again. None  
10 ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master and seek for companions.

15 Another inconvenience of Milton's design is, that it requires the description of what cannot be described—the agency of spirits. He saw that immateriality supplied no images, and that he could not show angels acting but by instruments of action; he therefore in-  
20 vested them with form and matter. This, being necessary, was therefore defensible; and he should have secured the consistency of his system by keeping immateriality out of sight, and enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts. But he has unhappily  
25 perplexed his poetry with his philosophy. His infernal and celestial powers are sometimes pure spirit and sometimes animated body. When Satan walks with his lance upon the *burning marle*, he has a body; when, in his passage between hell and the new world,  
30 he is in danger of sinking in the vacuity, and is supported by a gust of rising vapours, he has a body; when he animates the toad, he seems to be mere spirit,

that can penetrate matter at pleasure ; when he *starts up in his own shape*, he has at least a determined form ; and when he is brought before Gabriel, he has *a spear and a shield*, which he had the power of hiding in the toad, though the arms of the contending angels are evidently material. 5

The vulgar inhabitants of Pandæmonium, being *incorporeal spirits*, are *at large, though without number*, in a limited space ; yet in the battle, when they were overwhelmed by mountains, their armour hurt them, 10 *crushed in upon their substance, now grown gross by sinning*. This likewise happened to the uncorrupted angels, who were overthrown the *sooner for their arms, for unarmed they might easily as spirits have evaded by contraction or remove*. Even as spirits they are hardly 15 spiritual, for *contraction and remove* are images of matter ; but if they could have escaped without their armour, they might have escaped from it, and left only the empty cover to be battered. Uriel, when he rides on a sunbeam, is material ; Satan is material when he 20 is afraid of the prowess of Adam. The confusion of spirit and matter which pervades the whole narration of the war of heaven fills it with incongruity, and the book in which it is related is, I believe, the favourite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is 25 increased.

After the operation of immaterial agents, which cannot be explained, may be considered that of allegorical persons which have no real existence. To exalt causes into agents, to invest abstract ideas with 30 form and animate them with activity, has always been the right of poetry. But such airy beings are, for the

most part, suffered only to do their natural office and retire. Thus Fame tells a tale, and Victory hovers over a general, or perches on a standard; but Fame and Victory can do no more. To give them any real  
5 employment, or ascribe to them any material agency, is to make them allegorical no longer, but to shock the mind by ascribing effects to nonentity. In the 'Prometheus' of Æschylus we see Violence and Strength, and in the 'Alcestis' of Euripides we see  
10 Death, brought upon the stage, all as active persons of the drama; but no precedents can justify absurdity.

Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty. Sin is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portress of hell; but when they  
15 stop the journey of Satan, a journey described as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken. That Sin and Death should have shown the way to hell might have been allowed; but they cannot facilitate the passage by building a bridge,  
20 because the difficulty of Satan's passage is described as real and sensible, and the bridge ought to be only figurative. The hell assigned to the rebellious spirits is described as not less local than the residence of man. It is placed in some distant part of space,  
25 separated from the regions of harmony and order by a chaotic waste and an unoccupied vacuity; but Sin and Death worked up a *mole of aggravated soil*, cemented with *asphaltus*, a work too bulky for ideal architects. This unskilful allegory appears to me one of the  
30 greatest faults of the poem, and to this there was no temptation but the author's opinion of its beauty.

To the conduct of the narrative some objections



may be made. Satan is with great expectation brought before Gabriel in paradise, and is suffered to go away unmolested. The creation of man is represented as the consequence of the vacuity left in heaven by the expulsion of the rebels ; yet Satan mentions it as a report *rife in heaven* before his departure. To find sentiments for the state of innocence was very difficult, and something of anticipation perhaps is now and then discovered. Adam's discourse of dreams seems not to be the speculation of a new-created being. I know not whether his answer to the angel's reproof for curiosity does not want something of propriety : it is the speech of a man acquainted with many other men. Some philosophical notions, especially when the philosophy is false, might have been better omitted. The angel, in a comparison, speaks of *timorous deer* before deer were yet timorous, and before Adam could understand the comparison.

Dryden remarks that Milton has some flats among his elevations. This is only to say, that all the parts are not equal. In every work, one part must be for the sake of others : a palace must have passages ; a poem must have transitions. It is no more to be required that wit should always be blazing than that the sun should always stand at noon. In a great work there is a vicissitude of luminous and opaque parts, as there is in the world a succession of day and night. Milton, when he has expatiated in the sky, may be allowed sometimes to revisit earth ; for what other author ever soared so high, or sustained his flight so long ? Milton, being well versed in the Italian poets, appears to have borrowed often from them ; and, as

every man catches something from his companions, his desire of imitating Ariosto's levity has disgraced his work with the *Paradise of Fools*, a fiction not in itself ill-imagined, but too ludicrous for its place. His play  
 5 on words, in which he delights too often; his equivocations, which Bentley endeavours to defend by the example of the ancients; his unnecessary and ungraceful use of terms of art,—it is not necessary to mention, because they are easily remarked and generally cen-  
 10 sured, and at last bear so little proportion to the whole that they scarcely deserve the attention of a critic.

Such are the faults of that wonderful performance '*Paradise Lost*,' which he who can put in balance with its beauties must be considered not as nice but as  
 15 dull, as less to be censured for want of candour than pitied for want of sensibility.

Of '*Paradise Regained*,' the general judgment seems now to be right—that it is in many parts elegant, and everywhere instructive. It was not to be supposed  
 20 that the writer of '*Paradise Lost*' could ever write without great effusions of fancy and exalted precepts of wisdom. The basis of '*Paradise Regained*' is narrow: a dialogue without action can never please like a union of the narrative and dramatic powers. Had this poem  
 25 been written not by Milton but by some imitator, it would have claimed and received universal praise.

If '*Paradise Regained*' has been too much depreciated, '*Samson Agonistes*' has in requital been too much admired. It could only be by long prejudice  
 30 and the bigotry of learning that Milton could prefer the ancient tragedies, with their encumbrance of a chorus, to the exhibitions of the French and English

stages ; and it is only by a blind confidence in the reputation of Milton that a drama can be praised in which the intermediate parts have neither cause nor consequence, neither hasten nor retard the catastrophe. In this tragedy are, however, many particular beauties, many just sentiments and striking lines ; but it wants that power of attracting the attention which a well-connected plan produces. 5

Milton would not have excelled in dramatic writing : he knew human nature only in the gross, and had never studied the shades of character, nor the combinations of concurring, or the perplexity of contending passions. He had read much, and knew what books could teach ; but had mingled little in the world, and was deficient in the knowledge which experience must confer. Through all his greater works there prevails a uniform peculiarity of *diction*, a mode and cast of expression which bears little resemblance to that of any former writer, and which is so far removed from common use that an unlearned reader, when he first opens his book, finds himself surprised by a new language. 10 15 20

This novelty has been, by those who can find nothing wrong in Milton, imputed to his laborious endeavours after words suitable to the grandeur of his ideas. "Our language," says Addison, "sunk under him." But the truth is that, both in prose and verse, he had formed his style by a perverse and pedantic principle. He was desirous to use English words with a foreign idiom. This in all his prose is discovered and condemned, for there judgment operates freely, neither softened by the beauty nor awed by the dignity of his thoughts ; but such is the power of his poetry 25 30

that his call is obeyed without resistance, the reader feels himself in captivity to a higher and a nobler mind, and criticism sinks in admiration.

Milton's style was not modified by his subject ; what  
5 is shown with greater extent in 'Paradise Lost' may be found in 'Comus.' One source of his peculiarity was his familiarity with the Tuscan poets. The disposition of his words is, I think, frequently Italian, perhaps sometimes combined with other tongues. Of  
10 him, at last, may be said what Jonson says of Spenser, that "he wrote no language," but has formed what Butler calls a *Babylonish dialect*, in itself harsh and barbarous, but made by exalted genius and extensive learning the vehicle of so much instruction and so  
15 much pleasure that, like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity. Whatever be the faults of his diction, he cannot want the praise of copiousness and variety. He was master of his language in its full extent, and has selected the melodious words with such diligence  
20 that from his book alone the art of English poetry might be learned.

After his diction something must be said of his *versification*. *The measure*, he says, *is the English heroic verse without rhyme*. Of this mode he had many examples  
25 among the Italians, and some in his own country. The Earl of Surrey is said to have translated one of Virgil's books without rhyme ; and, besides our tragedies, a few short poems had appeared in blank verse, particularly one tending to reconcile the nation to Raleigh's wild  
30 attempt upon Guiana, and probably written by Raleigh himself. These petty performances cannot be supposed to have much influenced Milton, who more probably

took his hint from Trisino's 'Italia Liberata,' and, finding blank verse easier than rhyme, was desirous of persuading himself that it is better. "Rhyme," he says, and says truly, "is no necessary adjunct of true poetry." But perhaps of poetry, as a mental operation, metre or music is no necessary adjunct: it is, however, by the music of metre that poetry has been discriminated in all languages; and, in languages melodiously constructed with a due proportion of long and short syllables, metre is sufficient. But one language cannot communicate its rules to another: where metre is scanty and imperfect some help is necessary. The music of the English heroic lines strikes the ear so faintly that it is easily lost unless all the syllables of every line co-operate together. This co-operation can be only obtained by the preservation of every verse unmingled with another as a distinct system of sounds, and this distinctness is obtained and preserved by the artifice of rhyme. The variety of pauses, so much boasted by the lovers of blank verse, changes the measures of an English poet to the periods of a declaimer; and there are only a few skilful and happy readers of Milton who enable their audience to perceive where the lines end or begin. "Blank verse," said an ingenious critic, "seems to be verse only to the eye."

Poetry may subsist without rhyme, but English poetry will not often please; nor can rhyme ever be safely spared but where the subject is able to support itself. Blank verse makes some approach to that which is called the *lapidary style*,—has neither the easiness of prose nor the melody of numbers, and therefore tires by long continuance. Of the Italian writers with-

out rhyme, whom Milton alleges as precedents, not one is popular ; what reason could urge in its defence has been confuted by the ear. But whatever be the advantage of rhyme, I cannot prevail on myself to  
5 wish that Milton had been a rhymers, for I cannot wish his work to be other than it is. Yet, like other heroes, he is to be admired rather than imitated. He that thinks himself capable of astonishing may write blank verse ; but those that hope only to please must  
10 condescend to rhyme.

The highest praise of genius is original invention. Milton cannot be said to have contrived the structure of an epic poem, and therefore owes reverence to that vigour and amplitude of mind to which all genera-  
15 tions must be indebted for the art of poetical narration, for the texture of the fable, the variation of incidents, the interposition of dialogue, and all the stratagems that surprise and enchain attention. But of all the borrowers from Homer, Milton is perhaps the least  
20 indebted. He was naturally a thinker for himself, confident of his own abilities, and disdainful of help or hindrance : he did not refuse admission to the thoughts or images of his predecessors, but he did not seek them. From his contemporaries he neither courted nor re-  
25 ceived support ; there is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified or favour gained ; no exchange of praise nor solicitation of support. His great works were performed under discountenance and in blindness, but difficulties van-  
30 ished at his touch. He was born for whatever is arduous ; and his work is not the greatest of heroic poems only because it is not the first.

ADDISON









Joseph Addison.

*From the Painting by Michael Dahl  
in the National Portrait Gallery.*

## ADDISON.

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JOSEPH ADDISON was born on the 1st of May 1672, at Milston—of which his father, Lancelot Addison, was then rector—near Ambrosbury, in Wiltshire, and appearing weak and unlikely to live, he was christened the same day. After the usual domestic education, which from the character of his father may be reasonably supposed to have given him strong impressions of piety, he was committed to the care of Mr Naish at Ambrosbury, and afterwards of Mr Taylor at Salisbury. 5 10

Not to name the school or the masters of men illustrious for literature is a kind of historical fraud, by which honest fame is injuriously diminished. I would therefore trace him through the whole process of his education. In 1683, in the beginning of his twelfth year, his father being made Dean of Lichfield, naturally carried his family to his new residence, and, I believe, placed him for some time, probably not long, under Mr Shaw, then master of the school at Lichfield, father of the late Dr Peter Shaw. Of this interval his biographers 15 20

have given no account, and I know it only from a story of a *barring-out*, told me, when I was a boy, by Andrew Corbet of Shropshire, who had heard it from Mr Pigot, his uncle.

5 The practice of *barring-out* was a savage licence, practised in many schools to the end of the last century, by which the boys, when the periodical vacation drew near, growing petulant at the approach of liberty, some days before the time of regular recess, took possession  
10 of the school, of which they barred the doors and bade their master defiance from the windows. It is not easy to suppose that on such occasions the master would do more than laugh; yet, if tradition may be credited, he often struggled hard to force or  
15 surprise the garrison. The master, when Pigot was a schoolboy, was *barred-out* at Lichfield; and the whole operation, as he said, was planned and conducted by Addison.

To judge better of the probability of this story, I  
20 have inquired when he was sent to the Chartreux; but, as he was not one of those who enjoyed the founder's benefaction, there is no account preserved of his admission. At the school of the Chartreux, to which he was removed either from that of Salisbury or Lichfield, he  
25 pursued his juvenile studies under the care of Dr Ellis, and contracted that intimacy with Sir Richard Steele which their joint labours have so effectually recorded. Of this memorable friendship the greater praise must be given to Steele. It is not hard to love those from  
30 whom nothing can be feared, and Addison never considered Steele as a rival; but Steele lived, as he confesses, under an habitual subjection to the predomi-

nating genius of Addison, whom he always mentioned with reverence and treated with obsequiousness.

Addison,<sup>1</sup> who knew his own dignity, could not always forbear to show it by playing a little upon his admirer. But he was in no danger of retort : his jests were en- 5  
dured without resistance or resentment. But the sneer of jocularly was not the worst. Steele, whose imprudence of generosity or vanity of profusion kept him always incurably necessitous, upon some pressing exigence, in an evil hour, borrowed a hundred pounds of 10  
his friend, probably without much purpose of repayment ; but Addison, who seems to have had other notions of a hundred pounds, grew impatient of delay, and reclaimed his loan by an execution. Steele felt with great sensibility the obduracy of his creditor, but 15  
with emotions of sorrow rather than of anger.

In 1687 he was entered into Queen's College in Oxford, where, in 1689, the accidental perusal of some Latin verses gained him the patronage of Dr Lancaster, afterwards provost of Queen's College, by whose recom- 20  
mendation he was elected into Magdalen College as a Demy, a term by which that society denominates those which are elsewhere called Scholars—young men who partake of the founder's benefaction, and succeed in their order to vacant fellowships.<sup>2</sup> Here he continued 25  
to cultivate poetry and criticism, and grew first eminent by his Latin compositions, which are indeed entitled to particular praise. He has not confined himself to the imitation of any ancient author, but has formed his style from the general language, such as a diligent 30

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

<sup>2</sup> He took the degree of M.A. February 14, 1693.

perusal of the productions of different ages happened to supply. His Latin compositions seem to have had much of his fondness, for he collected a second volume of the 'Musæ Anglicanæ,' perhaps for a convenient  
5 receptacle, in which all his Latin pieces are inserted, and where his poem on the Peace has the first place. He afterwards presented the collection to Boileau, who from that time "conceived," says Tickell, "an opinion of the English genius for poetry." Nothing is better  
10 known of Boileau than that he had an injudicious and peevish contempt of modern Latin, and therefore his profession of regard was probably the effect of his civility rather than approbation.

Three of his Latin poems are upon subjects on which,  
15 perhaps, he would not have ventured to have written in his own language—'The Battle of the Pigmies and Cranes,' 'The Barometer,' and 'A Bowling-green.' When the matter is low or scanty, a dead language, in which nothing is mean because nothing is familiar,  
20 affords great conveniences; and, by the sonorous magnificence of Roman syllables, the writer conceals penury of thought and want of novelty often from the reader, and often from himself.

In his twenty-second year he first showed his power  
25 of English poetry by some verses addressed to Dryden, and soon afterwards published a translation of the greater part of the Fourth Georgic upon Bees, after which, says Dryden, "my latter swarm is scarcely worth the hiving." About the same time he composed the argu-  
30 ments prefixed to the several books of Dryden's Virgil, and produced an Essay on the Georgics, juvenile, superficial, and uninstrucive, without much either of

the scholar's learning or the critic's penetration. His next paper of verses contained a character of the principal English poets, inscribed to Henry Sacheverell, who was then, if not a poet, a writer of verses,—as is shown by his version of a small part of Virgil's *Georgics*, published in the 'Miscellanies,' and a Latin *encomium* on Queen Mary, in the 'Musæ Anglicanæ.' These verses exhibit all the fondness of friendship; but, on one side or the other, friendship was afterwards too weak for the malignity of faction. In this poem is a very confident and discriminate character of Spenser, whose work he had then never read.<sup>1</sup> So little sometimes is criticism the effect of judgment. It is necessary to inform the reader, that about this time he was introduced by Congreve to Montague, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. Addison was then learning the trade of a courtier, and subjoined Montague as a poetical name to those of Cowley and of Dryden. By the influence of Mr Montague, concurring, according to Tickell, with his natural modesty, he was diverted from his original design of entering into holy orders. Montague alleged the corruption of men who engaged in civil employments without liberal education—and declared that, though he was represented as an enemy to the Church, he would never do it any injury but by withholding Addison from it.

Soon after (in 1695) he wrote a poem to King William, with a rhyming introduction addressed to Lord Somers. King William had no regard to elegance or literature: his study was only war. Yet by a choice of ministers, whose disposition was very different

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

from his own, he procured, without intention, a very liberal patronage to poetry. Addison was caressed both by Somers and Montague.

In 1697 appeared his Latin verses on the Peace of Ryswick, which he dedicated to Montague, and which was afterwards called by Smith "the best Latin poem since the *Æneid*." Praise must not be too rigorously examined; but the performance cannot be denied to be vigorous and elegant. Having yet no public employment, he obtained (in 1699) a pension of three hundred pounds a-year, that he might be enabled to travel. He stayed a year at Blois<sup>1</sup>—probably to learn the French language—and then proceeded in his journey to Italy, which he surveyed with the eyes of a poet. While he was travelling at leisure he was far from being idle, for he not only collected his observations on the country, but found time to write his 'Dialogues on Medals,' and four acts of 'Cato.' Such, at least, is the relation of Tickell. Perhaps he only collected his materials and formed his plan. Whatever were his other employments in Italy, he there wrote the letter to Lord Halifax which is justly considered as the most elegant, if not the most sublime, of his poetical productions. But in about two years he found it necessary to hasten home, being, as Swift informs us, distressed by indigence, and compelled to become the tutor of a travelling squire, because his pension was not remitted.

At his return he published his 'Travels,' with a dedication to Lord Somers. As his stay in foreign countries was short, his observations are such as might be sup-

<sup>1</sup> Spence.



plied by a hasty view, and consist chiefly in comparisons of the present face of the country with the descriptions left us by the Roman poets, from whom he made preparatory collections, though he might have spared the trouble had he known that such collections 5 had been made twice before by Italian authors. The most amusing passage of his book is his account of the minute republic of San Marino. Of many parts it is not a very severe censure to say that they might have been written at home. His elegance of language and 10 variegation of prose and verse, however, gains upon the reader; and the book, though a while neglected, became in time so much the favourite of the public, that before it was reprinted it rose to five times its price. 15

When he returned to England (in 1702), with a meanness of appearance which gave testimony of the difficulties to which he had been reduced, he found his old patrons out of power, and was therefore, for a time, at full leisure for the cultivation of his mind, and a 20 mind so cultivated gives reason to believe that little time was lost. But he remained not long neglected or useless. The victory at Blenheim (1704) spread triumph and confidence over the nation; and Lord Godolphin, lamenting to Lord Halifax that it had not 25 been celebrated in a manner equal to the subject, desired him to propose it to some better poet. Halifax told him that there was no encouragement for genius; that worthless men were unprofitably enriched with public money, without any care to find or employ those 30 whose appearance might do honour to their country. To this Godolphin replied, that such abuses should in

time be rectified, and that if a man could be found capable of the task then proposed, he should not want an ample recompense. Halifax then named Addison, but required that the treasurer should apply to him in  
5 his own person. Godolphin sent the message by Mr Boyle, afterwards Lord Carlton ; and Addison, having undertaken the work, communicated it to the Treasurer while it was yet advanced no further than the simile of the angel, and was immediately rewarded by suc-  
10 ceeding Mr Locke in the place of Commissioner of Appeals.

In the following year he was at Hanover with Lord Halifax, and the year after was made Under-Secretary of State, first to Sir Charles Hedges, and in a few  
15 months more to the Earl of Sunderland. About this time the prevalent taste for Italian operas inclined him to try what would be the effect of a musical drama in our own language. He therefore wrote the opera of 'Rosamond,' which, when exhibited on the stage,  
20 was either hissed or neglected ; but, trusting that the readers would do him more justice, he published it with an inscription to the Duchess of Marlborough, a woman without skill, or pretensions to skill, in poetry or literature. His dedication was therefore an instance  
25 of servile absurdity, to be exceeded only by Joshua Barnes's dedication of a Greek Anacreon to the Duke. His reputation had been somewhat advanced by 'The Tender Husband,' a comedy which Steele dedicated to him, with a confession that he owed to him several  
30 of the most successful scenes. To this play Addison supplied a prologue.

When the Marquis of Wharton was appointed Lord

Lieutenant of Ireland, Addison attended him as his secretary, and was made keeper of the records in Birmingham's Tower, with a salary of three hundred pounds a-year. The office was little more than nominal, and the salary was augmented for his accommodation. 5 Interest and faction allow little to the operation of particular dispositions or private opinions. Two men of personal characters more opposite than those of Wharton and Addison could not easily be brought together. Wharton was impious, profligate, and shame- 10 less, without regard, or appearance of regard, to right and wrong. Whatever is contrary to this may be said of Addison; but as agents of a party they were connected, and how they adjusted their other sentiments we cannot know. 15

Addison must, however, not be too hastily condemned. It is not necessary to refuse benefits from a bad man when the acceptance implies no approbation of his crimes; nor has the subordinate officer any obligation to examine the opinions or conduct of those 20 under whom he acts, except that he may not be made the instrument of wickedness. It is reasonable to suppose that Addison counteracted, as far as he was able, the malignant and blasting influence of the lieutenant, and that at least by his intervention some good was 25 done, and some mischief prevented. When he was in office he made a law to himself, as Swift has recorded, never to remit his regular fees in civility to his friends —“For,” said he, “I may have a hundred friends, and if my fee be two guineas, I shall, by relinquishing my 30 right, lose two hundred guineas, and no friend gain more than two; there is therefore no proportion be-

tween the good imparted and the evil suffered." He was in Ireland when Steele, without any communication of his design, began the publication of the 'Tatler'; but he was not long concealed. By inserting a remark  
5 on Virgil, which Addison had given him, he discovered himself. It is indeed not easy for any man to write upon literature or common life, so as not to make himself known to those with whom he familiarly converses, and who are acquainted with his track of study, his  
10 favourite topics, his peculiar notions, and his habitual phrases.

If Steele desired to write in secret, he was not lucky; a single month detected him. His first 'Tatler' was published April 22 (1709), and Addison's  
15 contribution appeared May 26. Tickell observes that the 'Tatler' began and was concluded without his concurrence. This is doubtless literally true; but the work did not suffer much by his unconsciousness of its commencement or his absence at its cessation,  
20 for he continued his assistance to December 23, and the paper stopped on January 2. He did not distinguish his pieces by any signature; and I know not whether his name was not kept secret till the papers were collected into volumes.

25 To the 'Tatler,' in about two months, succeeded the 'Spectator,' a series of essays of the same kind, but written with less levity, upon a more regular plan, and published daily. Such an undertaking showed the writers not to distrust their own copiousness of  
30 materials or facility of composition, and their performance justified their confidence. They found, however, in their progress, many auxiliaries. To

attempt a single paper was no terrifying labour ; many pieces were offered, and many were received.

Addison had enough of the zeal of party ; but Steele had at that time almost nothing else. The ‘Spectator,’ in one of the first papers, showed the political tenets of its authors ; but a resolution was soon taken of courting general approbation by general topics, and subjects on which faction had produced no diversity of sentiments, such as literature, morality, and familiar life. To this practice they adhered with very few deviations. The ardour of Steele once broke out in praise of Marlborough ; and when Dr Fleetwood prefixed to some sermons a preface overflowing with Whiggish opinions, that it might be read by the Queen, it was reprinted in the ‘Spectator.’

To teach the minuter decencies and inferior duties, to regulate the practice of daily conversation, to correct those depravities which are rather ridiculous than criminal, and remove those grievances which, if they produce no lasting calamities, impress hourly vexation, was first attempted by Casa in his book of ‘Manners,’ and Castiglione in his ‘Courtier,’—two books yet celebrated in Italy for purity and elegance, and which, if they are now less read, are neglected only because they have effected that reformation which their authors intended, and their precepts now are no longer wanted. Their usefulness to the age in which they were written is sufficiently attested by the translations which almost all the nations of Europe were in haste to obtain. This species of instruction was continued, and perhaps advanced, by the French, among whom La Bruyère’s ‘Manners of the Age’—though, as Boileau remarked, it

is written without connection—certainly deserves great praise for liveliness of description and justness of observation.

Before the ‘Tatler’ and ‘Spectator,’ if the writers  
5 for the theatre are excepted, England had no masters of common life. No writers had yet undertaken to reform either the savageness of neglect or the impertinence of civility; to show when to speak or to be silent; how to refuse or how to comply. We had  
10 many books to teach us our more important duties, and to settle opinions in philosophy or politics; but an *Arbiter Elegantiarum*, a judge of propriety, was yet wanting who should survey the track of daily conversation, and free it from thorns and prickles which  
15 tease the passer though they do not wound him. For this purpose nothing is so proper as the frequent publication of short papers, which we read not as study but amusement. If the subject be slight, the treatise likewise is short. The busy may find time, and the  
20 idle may find patience. This mode of conveying cheap and easy knowledge began among us in the Civil War, when it was much the interest of either party to raise and fix the prejudices of the people. At that time appeared ‘Mercurius Aulicus,’ ‘Mercurius Rusticus,’ and  
25 ‘Mercurius Civicus.’ It is said that when any title grew popular, it was stolen by the antagonist, who by this stratagem conveyed his notions to those who would not have received him had he not worn the appearance of a friend. The tumult of those unhappy days  
30 left scarcely any man leisure to treasure up occasional compositions, and so much were they neglected that a complete collection is nowhere to be found. These

'Mercuries' were succeeded by L'Estrange's 'Observer,' and that by Lesley's 'Rehearsal,' and perhaps by others; but hitherto nothing had been conveyed to the people, in this commodious manner, but controversy relating to the Church or State, of which they taught many to talk whom they could not teach to judge. 5

It has been suggested, that the Royal Society was instituted soon after the Restoration to divert the attention of the people from public discontent. The 'Tatler' and the 'Spectator' had the same tendency: 10 they were published at a time when two parties, loud, restless, and violent, each with plausible declarations, and each perhaps without any distinct termination of its views, were agitating the nation. To minds heated with political contest they supplied cooler and more 15 inoffensive reflections; and it is said by Addison, in a subsequent work, that they had a perceptible influence upon the conversation of that time, and taught the frolic and the gay to unite merriment with decency, an effect which they can never wholly lose while they 20 continue to be among the first books by which both sexes are initiated in the elegances of knowledge.

The 'Tatler' and 'Spectator' adjusted, like Casa, the unsettled practice of daily intercourse by propriety and politeness, and, like La Bruyère, exhibited the 25 *Characters and Manners of the Age*. The personages introduced in these papers were not merely ideal; they were then known, and conspicuous in various stations. Of the 'Tatler' this is told by Steele in his last paper, and of the 'Spectator' by Budgell in the preface to 30 'Theophrastus,' a book which Addison has recommended, and which he was suspected to have revised,

if he did not write it. Of those portraits, which may be supposed to be sometimes embellished and sometimes aggravated, the originals are now partly known and partly forgotten. But to say that they united the  
5 plans of two or three eminent writers, is to give them but a small part of their due praise : they superadded literature and criticism, and sometimes towered far above their predecessors, and taught, with great just-ness of argument and dignity of language, the most  
10 important duties and sublime truths. All these topics were happily varied with elegant fictions and refined allegories, and illuminated with different changes of style and felicities of invention.

It is recorded by Budgell, that of the characters  
15 feigned or exhibited in the 'Spectator,' the favourite of Addison was Sir Roger de Coverley, of whom he had formed a very delicate and discriminated idea, which he would not suffer to be violated ; and therefore, when Steele had shown him innocently picking up a girl in  
20 the Temple and taking her to a tavern, he drew upon himself so much of his friend's indignation, that he was forced to appease him by a promise of forbearing Sir Roger for the time to come. The reason which induced Cervantes to bring his hero to the grave—  
25 *para mi solo nacio Don Quixote, y yo para el*—made Addison declare, with an undue vehemence of expression, that he would kill Sir Roger, being of opinion that they were born for one another, and that any other hand would do him wrong.

30 It may be doubted whether Addison ever filled up his original delineation. He describes his knight as having his imagination somewhat warped ; but of this



perversion he has made very little use. The irregularities in Sir Roger's conduct seem not so much the effects of a mind deviating from the beaten track of life by the perpetual pressure of some overwhelming idea, as of habitual rusticity, and that negligence which solitary grandeur naturally generates. The variable weather of the mind, the flying vapours of incipient madness, which from time to time cloud reason without eclipsing it, it requires so much nicety to exhibit, that Addison seems to have been deterred from prosecuting his own design. 5 10

To Sir Roger, who, as a country gentleman, appears to be a Tory, or, as it is gently expressed, an adherent to the landed interest, is opposed Sir Andrew Freeport, a new man, a wealthy merchant, zealous for the moneyed interest, and a Whig. Of this contrariety of opinions, it is probable more consequences were at first intended than could be produced when the resolution was taken to exclude party from the paper. Sir Andrew does but little, and that little seems not to have pleased Addison, who, when he dismissed him from the club, changed his opinions. Steele had made him, in the true spirit of unfeeling commerce, declare that he "would not build an hospital for idle people"; but at last he buys land, settles in the country, and builds not a manufactory, but an hospital for twelve old husbandmen, for men with whom a merchant has little acquaintance, and whom he commonly considers with little kindness. 15 20 25

Of essays thus elegant, thus instructive, and thus commodiously distributed, it is natural to suppose the approbation general and the sale numerous. I once 30

heard it observed that the sale may be calculated by the product of the tax, related in the last number to produce more than twenty pounds a-week, and therefore stated at one-and-twenty pounds, or three pounds  
5 ten shillings a-day : this, at a halfpenny a paper, will give sixteen hundred and eighty for the daily number. This sale is not great ; yet this, if Swift be credited, was likely to grow less ; for he declares that the  
10 of the *fair sex*, had before his recess wearied his readers.

The next year (1713), in which 'Cato' came upon the stage, was the grand climacteric of Addison's reputation. Upon the death of 'Cato' he had, as is said,  
15 planned a tragedy in the time of his travels, and had for several years the four first acts finished, which were shown to such as were likely to spread their admiration. They were seen by Pope and by Cibber, who relates that Steele, when he took back the copy, told him, in  
20 the despicable cant of literary modesty, that whatever spirit his friend had shown in the composition, he doubted whether he would have courage sufficient to expose it to the censure of a British audience. The  
time, however, was now come when those who affected  
25 to think liberty in danger affected likewise to think that a stage-play might preserve it, and Addison was importuned, in the name of the tutelary deities of Britain, to show his courage and his zeal by finishing his design. To resume his work he seemed perversely  
30 and unaccountably unwilling ; and by a request, which perhaps he wished to be denied, desired Mr Hughes to add a fifth act. Hughes supposed him serious,

and, undertaking the supplement, brought in a few days some scenes for his examination. But he had in the meantime gone to work himself and produced half an act, which he afterwards completed, but with brevity irregularly disproportionate to the foregoing 5 parts, like a task performed with reluctance, and hurried to its conclusion.

It may yet be doubted whether 'Cato' was made public by any change of the author's purpose; for Dennis charged him with raising prejudices in his own 10 favour by false positions of preparatory criticism, and with *poisoning the town* by contradicting in the 'Spectator' the established rule of poetical justice because his own hero, with all his virtues, was to fall before a tyrant. The fact is certain; the motives we must 15 guess. Addison was, I believe, sufficiently disposed to bar all avenues against all danger. When Pope brought him the prologue, which is properly accommodated to the play, there were these words, "Britons, arise! be worth like this approved"; meaning nothing 20 more than, Britons, erect and exalt yourselves to the approbation of public virtue. Addison was frightened lest he should be thought a promoter of insurrection, and the line was liquidated to "Britons, attend."

Now, "heavily in clouds came on the day, the great, 25 the important day," when Addison was to stand the hazard of the theatre. That there might, however, be left as little to hazard as was possible, on the first night Steele, as himself relates, undertook to pack an audience. This, says Pope,<sup>1</sup> had been tried for the first 30 time in favour of the 'Distressed Mother,' and was

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

now, with more efficacy, practised for 'Cato.' The danger was soon over. The whole nation was at that time on fire with faction. The Whigs applauded every line in which liberty was mentioned, as a satire on the  
5 Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap, to show that the satire was unfelt. The story of Bolingbroke is well known. He called Booth to his box, and gave him fifty guineas for defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual dictator. The Whigs, says  
10 Pope, design a second present, when they can accompany it with as good a sentence.

The play, supported thus by the emulation of factious praise, was acted night after night for a longer time than, I believe, the public had allowed to any  
15 drama before; and the author, as Mrs Porter long afterwards related, wandered through the whole exhibition behind the scenes with restless and unappeasable solicitude. When it was printed, notice was given that the queen would be pleased if it was dedicated to her;  
20 "but, as he had designed that compliment elsewhere, he found himself obliged," says Tickell, "by his duty on the one hand and his honour on the other, to send it into the world without any dedication."

Human happiness has always its abatements; the  
25 brightest sunshine of success is not without a cloud. No sooner was "Cato" offered to the reader than it was attacked by the acute malignity of Dennis, with all the violence of angry criticism. Dennis, though equally zealous, and probably by his temper more  
30 furious than Addison for what they called liberty, and though a flatterer of the Whig ministry, could not sit quiet at a successful play, but was eager to

tell friends and enemies that they had misplaced their admirations. The world was too stubborn for instruction ; with the fate of the censurer of Corneille's 'Cid,' his animadversions showed his anger without effect, and 'Cato' continued to be praised. 5

Pope had now an opportunity of courting the friendship of Addison by vilifying his old enemy, and could give resentment its full play without appearing to revenge himself. He therefore published 'A Narrative of the Madness of John Dennis,' a 10 performance which left the objections to the play in their full force, and therefore discovered more desire of vexing the critic than of defending the poet. Addison, who was no stranger to the world, probably saw the selfishness of Pope's friendship ; and, resolving that he should have the consequences of his officiousness to himself, informed Dennis, by Steele, that he was sorry for the insult, and that whenever he should think fit to answer his remarks, he would do it in a manner to which nothing could be objected. 20

The greatest weakness of the play is in the scenes of love, which are said by Pope<sup>1</sup> to have been added to the original plan, upon a subsequent review, in compliance with the popular practice of the stage. Such an authority it is hard to reject ; yet the love 25 is so intimately mingled with the whole action, that it cannot easily be thought extrinsic and adventitious ; for, if it were taken away, what would be left ? or how were the four acts filled in the first draught ? At the publication the wits seemed proud to pay their 30 attendance with encomiastic verses. The best are

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

from an unknown hand, which will, perhaps, lose somewhat of their praise when the author is known to be Jeffreys.

‘Cato’ had yet other honours. It was censured as  
5 a party play by a Scholar of Oxford, and defended  
in a favourable examination by Dr Sewel. It was  
translated by Salvini into Italian, and acted at Florence;  
and by the Jesuits of St Omer’s into Latin,  
and played by their pupils. Of this version a copy  
10 was sent to Mr Addison: it is to be wished that it  
could be found, for the sake of comparing their version  
of the soliloquy with that of Bland. A tragedy  
was written on the same subject by Des Champs, a  
French poet, which was translated with a criticism  
15 on the English play. But the translator and the  
critic are now forgotten.

Dennis lived on unanswered, and therefore little read. Addison knew the policy of literature too well  
20 to make his enemy important by drawing the attention  
of the public upon a criticism which, though sometimes  
intemperate, was often irrefragable.

While ‘Cato’ was upon the stage, another daily  
paper, called the ‘Guardian,’ was published by Steele.  
To this Addison gave great assistance, whether occa-  
25 sionally or by previous engagement is not known. The  
character of Guardian was too narrow and too serious:  
it might properly enough admit both the duties and  
the decencies of life, but seemed not to include literary  
speculations, and was in some degree violated by mer-  
30 riment and burlesque. What had the Guardian of  
the Lizards to do with clubs of tall or of little men,  
with nests of ants, or with Strada’s prolusions? Of

this paper nothing is necessary to be said, but that it found many contributors, and that it was a continuation of the 'Spectator,' with the same elegance and the same variety, till some unlucky sparkle from a Tory paper set Steele's politics on fire, and wit at once blazed into faction. He was soon too hot for neutral topics, and quitted the 'Guardian' to write the 'Englishman.'

The papers of Addison are marked in the 'Spectator' by one of the letters in the name of Clio, and in the 'Guardian' by a *hand*; whether it was, as Tickell pretends to think, that he was unwilling to usurp the praise of others, or as Steele, with far greater likelihood, insinuates, that he could not without discontent impart to others any of his own. I have heard that his avidity did not satisfy itself with the air of renown, but that with great eagerness he laid hold on his proportion of the profits.

Many of these papers were written with powers truly comic, with nice discrimination of characters, and accurate observation of natural or accidental deviations from propriety; but it was not supposed that he had tried a comedy on the stage, till Steele, after his death, declared him the author of the 'Drummer.' This, however, Steele did not know to be true by any direct testimony; for, when Addison put the play into his hands, he only told him it was the work of a "gentleman in the company"; and when it was received, as is confessed, with cold disapprobation, he was probably less willing to claim it. Tickell omitted it in his collection; but the testimony of Steele, and the total silence of any other claimant,

has determined the public to assign it to Addison, and it is now printed with his other poetry. Steele carried the 'Drummer' to the play-house, and afterwards to the press, and sold the copy for fifty  
5 guineas. To the opinion of Steele may be added the proof supplied by the play itself, of which the characters are such as Addison would have delineated, and the tendency such as Addison would have promoted. That it should have been ill received would  
10 raise wonder, did we not daily see the capricious distribution of theatrical praise.

He was not all this time an indifferent spectator of public affairs. He wrote, as different exigencies required (in 1707), 'The present State of the War,  
15 and the Necessity of an Augmentation,' which, however judicious, being written on temporary topics, and exhibiting no peculiar powers, laid hold on no attention, and has naturally sunk by its own weight into neglect. This cannot be said of the few papers en-  
20 titled 'The Whig Examiner,' in which is employed all the force of gay malevolence and humorous satire. Of this paper, which just appeared and expired, Swift remarks, with exultation, that "it is now down among the dead men." He might well rejoice at the death  
25 of that which he could not have killed. Every reader of every party, since personal malice is past, and the papers which once inflamed the nation are read only as effusions of wit, must wish for more of the 'Whig Examiners'; for on no occasion was the genius of  
30 Addison more vigorously exerted, and on none did the superiority of his powers more evidently appear. His 'Trial of Count Tariff,' written to expose the treaty



of commerce with France, lived no longer than the question that produced it.

Not long afterwards an attempt was made to revive the 'Spectator,'—at a time, indeed, by no means favourable to literature, when the succession of a new family to the throne filled the nation with anxiety, discord, and confusion,—and either the turbulence of the times or the satiety of the readers put a stop to the publication, after an experiment of eighty numbers, which were afterwards collected into an eighth volume, perhaps more valuable than any one of those that went before it. Addison produced more than a fourth part; and the other contributors are by no means unworthy of appearing as his associates. The time that had passed during the suspension of the 'Spectator,' though it had not lessened his power of humour, seems to have increased his disposition to seriousness: the proportion of his religious to his comic papers is greater than in the former series.

The 'Spectator,' from its recommencement, was published only three times a-week, and no discriminative marks were added to the papers. To Addison, Tickell has ascribed twenty-three.<sup>1</sup> The 'Spectator' had many contributors; and Steele, whose negligence kept him always in a hurry, when it was his turn to furnish a paper, called loudly for the letters, of which Addison, whose materials were more, made little use, having recourse to sketches and hints, the product of his former studies, which he now reviewed and com-

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 556, 557, 558, 559, 561, 562, 565, 567, 568, 569, 571, 574, 575, 579, 580, 582, 583, 584, 585, 590, 592, 598, 600. [Johnson's list omits 560, which Tickell ascribes to Addison.—J. W. D.]

pleted. Among these are named by Tickell the Essays on Wit, those on the Pleasures of the Imagination, and the Criticism on Milton.

When the house of Hanover took possession of  
5 the throne, it was reasonable to expect that the zeal of Addison would be suitably rewarded. Before the arrival of King George he was made Secretary to the Regency, and was required by his office to send notice to Hanover that the queen was dead, and that the  
10 throne was vacant. To do this would not have been difficult to any man but Addison, who was so overwhelmed with the greatness of the event, and so distracted by choice of expression, that the Lords, who could not wait for the niceties of criticism, called Mr  
15 Southwell, a clerk in the house, and ordered him to despatch the message. Southwell readily told what was necessary in the common style of business, and valued himself upon having done what was too hard for Addison. He was better qualified for the 'Free-  
20 holder,' a paper which he published twice a-week, from December 23, 1715, to the middle of the next year. This was undertaken in defence of the established government, sometimes with argument, sometimes with mirth. In argument he had many equals,  
25 but his humour was singular and matchless. Bigotry itself must be delighted with the Tory Fox-hunter. There are, however, some strokes less elegant and less decent, such as the Pretender's Journal, in which one topic of ridicule is his poverty. This mode of abuse had been employed by Milton against King Charles II.

*"Jacobæi*

*Centum exulantis viscera marsupii regis."*

And Oldmixon delights to tell of some alderman of London, that he had more money than the exiled princes; but that which might be expected from Milton's savageness, or Oldmixon's meanness, was not suitable to the delicacy of Addison. Steele 5 thought the humour of the 'Freeholder' too nice and gentle for such noisy times, and is reported to have said that the ministry made use of a lute when they should have called for a trumpet.

This year (1716<sup>1</sup>) he married the Countess Dowager 10 of Warwick, whom he had solicited by a very long and anxious courtship, perhaps with behaviour not very unlike that of Sir Roger to his disdainful widow, and who, I am afraid, diverted herself often by playing with his passion. He is said to have first known 15 her by becoming tutor to her son.<sup>2</sup> "He formed," said Tonson, "the design of getting that lady from the time when he was first recommended into the family." In what part of his life he obtained the recommendation, or how long, and in what manner he lived in 20 the family, I know not. His advances at first were certainly timorous, but grew bolder as his reputation and influence increased, till at last the lady was persuaded to marry him, on terms much like those on which a Turkish princess is espoused, to whom the 25 Sultan is reported to pronounce, "Daughter, I give thee this man for thy slave." The marriage, if uncontradicted report can be credited, made no addition to his happiness: it neither found them nor made them equal. She always remembered her own rank, 30 and thought herself entitled to treat with very little

<sup>1</sup> August 2.<sup>2</sup> Spence.

ceremony the tutor of her son. Rowe's ballad of the 'Despairing Shepherd' is said to have been written, either before or after marriage, upon this memorable pair; and it is certain that Addison has left behind  
5 him no encouragement for ambitious love.

The year after (1717) he rose to his highest elevation, being made Secretary of State. For this employment he might be justly supposed qualified by long practice of business, and by his regular ascent through  
10 other offices. But expectation is often disappointed: it is universally confessed that he was unequal to the duties of his place. In the House of Commons he could not speak, and therefore was useless to the defence of the Government. In the office, says Pope,<sup>1</sup>  
15 he could not issue an order without losing his time in quest of fine expressions. What he gained in rank he lost in credit; and, finding by experience his own inability, was forced to solicit his dismissal, with a pension of fifteen hundred pounds a-year. His friends  
20 palliated this relinquishment, of which both friends and enemies knew the true reason, with an account of declining health, and the necessity of recess and quiet. He now returned to his vocation, and began to plan literary occupations for his future life. He  
25 purposed a tragedy on the death of Socrates,—a story of which, as Tickell remarks, the basis is narrow, and to which I know not how love could have been appended. There would, however, have been no want either of virtue in the sentiments or elegance in the  
30 language. He engaged in a nobler work, a defence of the Christian religion, of which part was published

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

after his death ; and he designed to have made a new poetical version of the Psalms. These pious compositions Pope imputed<sup>1</sup> to a selfish motive, upon the credit, as he owns, of Tonson, who, having quarrelled with Addison, and not loving him, said that when he laid down the secretary's office he intended to take orders and obtain a bishopric ; "for," said he, "I always thought him a priest in his heart." That Pope should have thought this conjecture of Tonson worth remembrance is a proof, but, indeed, so far as I have found, the only proof, that he retained some malignity from their ancient rivalry. Tonson pretended but to guess it ; no other mortal ever suspected it ; and Pope might have reflected that a man who had been Secretary of State in the ministry of Sunderland knew a nearer way to a bishopric than by defending religion or translating the Psalms.

It is related that he had once a design to make an English Dictionary, and that he considered Dr Tillotson as the writer of highest authority. There was formerly sent to me by Mr Locker, clerk of the Leathersellers' Company, who was eminent for curiosity and literature, a collection of examples selected from Tillotson's works, as Locker said, by Addison. It came too late to be of use, so I inspected it but slightly, and remember it indistinctly. I thought the passages too short. Addison, however, did not conclude his life in peaceful studies, but relapsed, when he was near his end, to a political dispute.

It so happened that (1718-19) a controversy was agitated with great vehemence between those friends

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

of long continuance, Addison and Steele. It may be asked, in the language of Homer, what power or what cause could set them at variance. The subject of their dispute was of great importance. The Earl of  
5 Sunderland proposed an Act called "The Peerage Bill," by which the number of peers should be fixed, and the king restrained from any new creation of nobility, unless when an old family should be extinct. To this the Lords would naturally agree ; and the king,  
10 who was yet little acquainted with his own prerogative, and, as is now well known, almost indifferent to the possessions of the crown, had been persuaded to consent. The only difficulty was found among the Commons, who were not likely to approve the perpetual  
15 exclusion of themselves and their posterity. The bill, therefore, was eagerly opposed, and among others by Sir Robert Walpole, whose speech was published.

The Lords might think their dignity diminished by improper advancements, and particularly by the intro-  
20 duction of twelve new peers at once, to produce a majority of Tories in the last reign ; an act of authority violent enough, yet certainly legal, and by no means to be compared with that contempt of national right with which, some time afterwards, by the instigation of  
25 Whiggism, the Commons, chosen by the people for three years, chose themselves for seven. But whatever might be the disposition of the Lords, the people had no wish to increase their power. The tendency of the bill, as Steele observed in a letter to the Earl of  
30 Oxford, was to introduce an aristocracy ; for a majority in the House of Lords, so limited, would have been despotic and irresistible.

To prevent this subversion of the ancient establishment, Steele, whose pen readily seconded his political passions, endeavoured to alarm the nation by a pamphlet called 'The Plebeian.' To this an answer was published by Addison, under the title of 'The Old Whig,' in which it is not discovered that Steele was then known to be the advocate for the Commons. Steele replied by a second 'Plebeian'; and, whether by ignorance or by courtesy, confined himself to his question, without any personal notice of his opponent. Nothing hitherto was committed against the laws of friendship or proprieties of decency; but controvertists cannot long retain their kindness for each other. The 'Old Whig' answered the 'Plebeian,' and could not forbear some contempt of "little Dicky, whose trade it was to write pamphlets." Dicky, however, did not lose his settled veneration for his friend, but contented himself with quoting some lines of 'Cato,' which were at once detection and reproof. The bill was laid aside during that session; and Addison died before the next, in which its commitment was rejected by two hundred and sixty-five to one hundred and seventy-seven.

Every reader surely must regret that these two illustrious friends, after so many years passed in confidence and endearment, in unity of interest, conformity of opinion, and fellowship of study, should finally part in acrimonious opposition. Such a controversy was "*Bellum plusquam civile*," as Lucan expresses it. Why could not faction find other advocates? But among the uncertainties of the human state we are doomed to number the instability of friendship. Of this dis-

pute I have little knowledge but from the 'Biographia Britannica.' The 'Old Whig' is not inserted in Addison's works, nor is it mentioned by Tickell in his Life. Why it was omitted the biographers doubtless give the  
5 true reason: the fact was too recent, and those who had been heated in the contention were not yet cool.

The necessity of complying with times, and of sparing persons, is the great impediment of biography. History may be formed from permanent monuments and records,  
10 but lives can only be written from personal knowledge, which is growing every day less, and in a short time is lost for ever. What is known can seldom be immediately told, and when it might be told it is no longer known. The delicate features of the mind, the nice  
15 discriminations of character, and the minute peculiarities of conduct are soon obliterated; and it is surely better that caprice, obstinacy, frolic, and folly, however they might delight in the description, should be silently forgotten, than that, by wanton merriment and un-  
20 seasonable detection, a pang should be given to a widow, a daughter, a brother, or a friend. As the process of these narratives is now bringing me among my contemporaries, I begin to feel myself "walking upon ashes under which the fire is not extinguished,"  
25 and coming to the time of which it will be proper rather to say "nothing that is false, than all that is true."

The end of this useful life was now approaching. Addison had for some time been oppressed by short-  
30 ness of breath, which was now aggravated by a dropsy; and, finding his danger pressing, he prepared to die conformably to his own precepts and professions.



During this lingering decay he sent, as Pope relates,<sup>1</sup> a message by the Earl of Warwick to Mr Gay, desiring to see him. Gay, who had not visited him for some time before, obeyed the summons, and found himself received with great kindness. The purpose for which 5 the interview had been solicited was then discovered. Addison told him that he had injured him, but that, if he recovered, he would recompense him. What the injury was he did not explain, nor did Gay ever know, but supposed that some preferment designed for him 10 had, by Addison's intervention, been withheld.

Lord Warwick was a young man of very irregular life, and perhaps of loose opinions. Addison, for whom he did not want respect, had very diligently endeavoured to reclaim him; but his arguments and 15 expostulations had no effect. One experiment, however, remained to be tried. When he found his life near its end, he directed the young lord to be called; and when he desired, with great tenderness, to hear his last injunctions, told him, "I have sent for you 20 that you may see how a Christian can die." What effect this awful scene had on the Earl I know not: he likewise died himself in a short time. In Tickell's excellent elegy on his friend are these lines:—

"He taught us how to live; and, oh! too high 25  
The price of knowledge, taught us how to die,"—

in which he alludes, as he told Dr Young, to this moving interview. Having given directions to Mr Tickell for the publication of his works, and dedicated them on his deathbed to his friend Mr Craggs, he died 30

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

June 17, 1719, at Holland House, leaving no child but a daughter.

Of his virtue, it is a sufficient testimony that the resentment of party has transmitted no charge of any  
5 crime. He was not one of those who are praised only after death ; for his merit was so generally acknowledged that Swift, having observed that his election passed without a contest, adds, that if he had proposed himself for king he would hardly have been refused.  
10 His zeal for his party did not extinguish his kindness for the merit of his opponents : when he was Secretary in Ireland, he refused to intermit his acquaintance with Swift. Of his habits or external manners nothing is so often mentioned as that timorous or sullen taciturnity, which his friends called modesty by too mild  
15 a name. Steele mentions with great tenderness "that remarkable bashfulness, which is a cloak that hides and muffles merit" ; and tells us that "his abilities were covered only by modesty, which doubles the beauties  
20 which are seen, and gives credit and esteem to all that are concealed." Chesterfield affirms that "Addison was the most timorous and awkward man that he ever saw." And Addison, speaking of his own deficiency in conversation, used to say of himself that, with respect to intellectual wealth, "he could draw bills for  
25 a thousand pounds, though he had not a guinea in his pocket." That he wanted current coin for ready payment, and by that want was often obstructed and distressed ; that he was oppressed by an improper  
30 and ungraceful timidity, every testimony concurs to prove ; but Chesterfield's representation is doubtless hyperbolical. That man cannot be supposed very

unexpert in the arts of conversation and practice of life who, without fortune or alliance, by his usefulness and dexterity, became Secretary of State, and who died at forty-seven, after having not only stood long in the highest rank of wit and literature, but filled one of the most important offices of State. 5

The time in which he lived had reason to lament his obstinacy of silence, "for he was," says Steele, "above all men in that talent called humour, and enjoyed it in such perfection that I have often reflected, after a night spent with him apart from all the world, that I had had the pleasure of conversing with an intimate acquaintance of Terence and Catullus, who had all their wit and nature, heightened with humour more exquisite and delightful than any other man ever possessed." This is the fondness of a friend: let us hear what is told us by a rival. "Addison's conversation,"<sup>1</sup> says Pope, "had something in it more charming than I have found in any other man. But this was only when familiar: before strangers, or perhaps a single stranger, he preserved his dignity by a stiff silence." This modesty was by no means inconsistent with a very high opinion of his own merit. He demanded to be the first name in modern wit, and, with Steele to echo him, used to depreciate Dryden, whom Pope and Congreve defended against them.<sup>2</sup> There is no reason to doubt that he suffered too much pain from the prevalence of Pope's poetical reputation; nor is it without strong reason suspected that by some disingenuous acts he endeavoured to obstruct it. Pope was not the only man whom he 30

<sup>1</sup> Spence.<sup>2</sup> Tonson and Spence.

insidiously injured, though the only man of whom he could be afraid. His own powers were such as might have satisfied him with conscious excellence. Of very extensive learning he has indeed given no proofs. He  
5 seems to have had small acquaintance with the sciences, and to have read little except Latin and French; but of the Latin poets, his 'Dialogues on Medals' show that he had perused the works with great diligence and skill. The abundance of his own mind left him little need  
10 of adventitious sentiments; his wit always could suggest what the occasion demanded. He had read with critical eyes the important volume of human life, and knew the heart of man from the depths of stratagem to the surface of affectation. What he knew he could  
15 easily communicate. "This," says Steele, "was particular in this writer, that, when he had taken his resolution or made his plan for what he designed to write, he would walk about a room and dictate it into language with as much freedom and ease as any one  
20 could write it down and attend to the coherence and grammar of what he dictated."

Pope,<sup>1</sup> who can be less suspected of favouring his memory, declares that he wrote very fluently, but was slow and scrupulous in correcting; that many of his  
25 'Spectators' were written very fast, and sent immediately to the press; and that it seemed to be for his advantage not to have time for much revisal. "He would alter," says Pope, "anything to please his friends before publication, but would not retouch his pieces  
30 afterwards; and I believe not one word in 'Cato' to which I made an objection was suffered to stand."

<sup>1</sup> Spence,

The last line of 'Cato' is Pope's, having been originally written—

“And, oh ! 'twas this that ended Cato's life.”

Pope might have made more objections to the six concluding lines. In the first couplet, the words “from 5 hence” are improper ; and the second line is taken from Dryden's Virgil. Of the next couplet, the first verse, being included in the second, is therefore useless ; and in the third, *Discord* is made to produce *Strife*.

Of the course of Addison's familiar day,<sup>1</sup> before his 10 marriage, Pope has given a detail. He had in the house with him Budgell, and perhaps Philips. His chief companions were Steele, Budgell, Philips, Carey, Davenant, and Colonel Brett. With one or other of these he always breakfasted. He studied all morn- 15 ing, then dined at a tavern, and went afterwards to Button's.

Button had been a servant in the Countess of Warwick's family, who, under the patronage of Addison, kept a coffee-house on the south side of Russell 20 Street, about two doors from Covent Garden. Here it was that the wits of that time used to assemble. It is said, when Addison had suffered any vexation from the Countess, he withdrew the company from Button's house. From the coffee-house he went again to a 25 tavern, where he often sat late, and drank too much wine. In the bottle discontent seeks for comfort, cowardice for courage, and bashfulness for confidence. It is not unlikely that Addison was first seduced to excess by the manumission which he obtained from 30

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

the servile timidity of his sober hours. He that feels oppression from the presence of those to whom he knows himself superior, will desire to set loose his powers of conversation ; and who that ever asked  
5 succours from Bacchus was able to preserve himself from being enslaved by his auxiliary ?

Among those friends it was that Addison displayed the elegance of his colloquial accomplishments, which may easily be supposed such as Pope represents them.  
10 The remark of Mandeville, who, when he had passed an evening in his company, declared that he was a parson in a tie-wig, can detract little from his character ; he was always reserved to strangers, and was not incited to uncommon freedom by a character like  
15 that of Mandeville. From any minute knowledge of his familiar manners, the intervention of sixty years has now debarred us. Steele once promised Congreve and the public a complete description of his character ; but the promises of authors are like the vows of lovers.  
20 Steele thought no more on his design, or thought on it with anxiety that at last disgusted him, and left his friend in the hands of Tickell.

One slight lineament of his character Swift has preserved. It was his practice, when he found any man  
25 invincibly wrong, to flatter his opinions by acquiescence, and sink him yet deeper in absurdity. This artifice of mischief was admired by Stella ; and Swift seems to approve her admiration. His works will supply some information. It appears, from his various  
30 pictures of the world, that, with all his bashfulness, he had conversed with many distinct classes of men, had surveyed their ways with very diligent observation,

and marked with great acuteness the effects of different modes of life. He was a man in whose presence nothing reprehensible was out of danger; quick in discerning whatever was wrong or ridiculous, and not unwilling to expose it. "There are," says Steele, "in his writings many oblique strokes upon some of the wittiest men of the age." His delight was more to excite merriment than detestation; and he detects follies rather than crimes. If any judgment be made, from his books, of his moral character, nothing will be found but purity and excellence. Knowledge of mankind, indeed, less extensive than that of Addison, will show that to write and to live are very different. Many who praise virtue do no more than praise it. Yet it is reasonable to believe that Addison's professions and practice were at no great variance, since amidst that storm of faction in which most of his life was passed, though his station made him conspicuous and his activity made him formidable, the character given him by his friends was never contradicted by his enemies. Of those with whom interest or opinion united him, he had not only the esteem but the kindness; and of others, whom the violence of opposition drove against him, though he might lose the love, he retained the reverence.

It is justly observed by Tickell that he employed wit on the side of virtue and religion. He not only made the proper use of wit himself, but taught it to others; and from his time it has been generally subservient to the cause of reason and of truth. He has dissipated the prejudice that had long connected gaiety with vice, and easiness of manners with laxity of prin-

ciples. He has restored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be ashamed. This is an elevation of literary character "above all Greek, above all Roman fame." No greater felicity can genius attain than that of having purified intellectual pleasure, separated mirth from indecency, and wit from licentiousness; of having taught a succession of writers to bring elegance and gaiety to the aid of goodness; and, if I may use expressions yet more awful, of having  
10 "turned many to righteousness."

Addison in his life, and for some time afterwards, was considered by the greater part of readers as supremely excelling both in poetry and criticism. Part of his reputation may be probably ascribed to the advancement of his fortune. When, as Swift observes, he became a statesman, and saw poets waiting at his levee, it was no wonder that praise was accumulated upon him. Much likewise may be more honourably ascribed to his personal character: he who, if he had claimed  
15 it, might have obtained the diadem, was not likely to be denied the laurel. But time quickly puts an end to artificial and accidental fame, and Addison is to pass through futurity protected only by his genius. Every name which kindness or interest once raised too high  
20 is in danger lest the next age should, by the vengeance of criticism, sink it in the same proportion. A great writer has lately styled him "an indifferent poet, and a worse critic."

His poetry is first to be considered, of which it must  
30 be confessed that it has not often those felicities of diction which give lustre to sentiments, or that vigour



of sentiment that animates diction: there is little of ardour, vehemence, or transport; there is very rarely the awfulness of grandeur, and not very often the splendour of elegance. He thinks justly, but he thinks faintly. This is his general character, to which, doubtless, many single passages will furnish exceptions. Yet, if he seldom reaches supreme excellence, he rarely sinks into dulness, and is still more rarely entangled in absurdity. He did not trust his powers enough to be negligent. There is in most of his compositions a calmness and equanimity, deliberate and cautious, sometimes with little that delights, but seldom with anything that offends. Of this kind seem to be his poems to Dryden, to Somers, and to the king. His ode on St Cecilia has been imitated by Pope, and has something in it of Dryden's vigour. Of his 'Account of the English Poets,' he used to speak as a "poor thing";<sup>1</sup> but it is not worse than his usual strain. He has said, not very judiciously, in his character of Waller—

"Thy verse could show even Cromwell's innocence,  
And compliment the storms that bore him hence.  
Oh! had thy Muse not come an age too soon,  
But seen great Nassau on the British throne,  
How had his triumph glittered in thy page!"

What is this but to say that he who could compliment Cromwell had been the proper poet for King William? Addison, however, never printed the piece.

The 'Letter from Italy' has been always praised, but has never been praised beyond its merit. It is more correct, with less appearance of labour, and more ele-

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

gant, with less ambition of ornament, than any other of his poems. There is, however, one broken metaphor, of which notice may properly be taken :—

“ Fired with that name—

- 5 I bridle in my struggling Muse with pain,  
That longs to launch into a nobler strain.”

To *bridle* a goddess is no very delicate idea ; but why must she be *bridled* ? because she *longs to launch*—an act which was never hindered by a *bridle* ; and whither  
10 will she *launch* ? into a *nobler strain*. She is in the first line a *horse*, in the second a *boat* ; and the care of the poet is to keep his *horse* or his *boat* from *singing*.

The next composition is the far-famed ‘ Campaign,’ which Dr Warton has termed a “ Gazette in Rhyme,”  
15 with harshness not often used by the good nature of his criticism. Before a censure so severe is admitted, let us consider that war is a frequent subject of poetry, and then inquire who has described it with more justness and force. Many of our own writers tried their powers  
20 upon this year of victory, yet Addison’s is confessedly the best performance. His poem is the work of a man not blinded by the dust of learning ; his images are not borrowed merely from books. The superiority which he confers upon his hero is not personal prowess and  
25 “ mighty bone,” but deliberate intrepidity, a calm command of his passions, and the power of consulting his own mind in the midst of danger. The rejection and contempt of fiction is rational and manly. It may be observed that the last line is imitated by Pope :—

- 30 “ Marlborough’s exploits appear divinely bright—  
Raised of themselves, their genuine charms they boast,  
And those that paint them truest, praise them most.”

This Pope had in his thoughts ; but not knowing how to use what was not his own, he spoiled the thought when he had borrowed it :—

“The well-sung woes shall soothe my ghost ;  
He best can paint them who shall feel them most.”

5

Martial exploits may be *painted* ; perhaps *woes* may be *painted* ; but they are surely not *painted* by being *well sung* : it is not easy to paint in song, or to sing in colours.

No passage in the ‘Campaign’ has been more often 10  
mentioned than the simile of the angel, which is said  
in the ‘Tatler’ to be “one of the noblest thoughts  
that ever entered into the heart of man,” and is there-  
fore worthy of attentive consideration. Let it be first  
inquired whether it be a simile. A poetical simile is 15  
the discovery of likeness between two actions, in their  
general nature dissimilar, or of causes terminating by  
different operations in some resemblance of effect.  
But the mention of another like consequence from a  
like cause, or of a like performance by a like agency, 20  
is not a simile, but an exemplification. It is not a  
simile to say that the Thames waters fields as the Po  
waters fields ; or that as Hecla vomits flames in Ice-  
land, so Ætna vomits flames in Sicily. When Horace  
says of Pindar that he pours his violence and rapidity 25  
of verse as a river swollen with rain rushes from the  
mountain ; or of himself, that his genius wanders in  
quest of poetical decorations as the bee wanders to  
collect honey,—he, in either case, produces a simile :  
the mind is impressed with the resemblance of things 30  
generally unlike, as unlike as intellect and body. But if

Pindar had been described as writing with the copiousness and grandeur of Homer, or Horace had told that he reviewed and finished his own poetry with the same care as Isocrates polished his orations, instead of similitude, he would have exhibited almost identity; he would have given the same portraits with different names. In the poem now examined, when the English are represented as gaining a fortified pass by repetition of attack and perseverance of resolution, their obstinacy of courage and vigour of onset is well illustrated by the sea that breaks, with incessant battery, the dykes of Holland. This is a simile. But when Addison, having celebrated the beauty of Marlborough's person, tells us that "Achilles thus was formed with every grace," here is no simile, but a mere exemplification. A simile may be compared to lines converging at a point, and is more excellent as the lines approach from greater distance: an exemplification may be considered as two parallel lines, which run on together without approximation, never far separated, and never joined.

Marlborough is so like the angel in the poem, that the action of both is almost the same, and performed by both in the same manner. Marlborough "teaches the battle to rage"; the angel "directs the storm": Marlborough is "unmoved in peaceful thought"; the angel is "calm and serene": Marlborough stands "unmoved amidst the shock of hosts"; the angel rides "calm in the whirlwind." The lines on Marlborough are just and noble; but the simile gives almost the same images a second time. But perhaps this thought, though hardly a simile, was remote from vulgar conceptions, and required great labour of

research, or dexterity of application. Of this Dr Madden, a name which Ireland ought to honour, once gave me his opinion. "If I had set," said he, "ten schoolboys to write on the battle of Blenheim, and eight had brought me the angel, I should not 5 have been surprised."

The opera of 'Rosamond,' though it is seldom mentioned, is one of the first of Addison's compositions. The subject is well chosen, the fiction is pleasing, and the praise of Marlborough, for which the scene 10 gives an opportunity, is, what perhaps every human excellence must be, the product of good luck improved by genius. The thoughts are sometimes great and sometimes tender; the versification is easy and gay. There is doubtless some advantage in the short- 15 ness of the lines, which there is little temptation to load with expletive epithets. The dialogue seems commonly better than the songs. The two comic characters of Sir Trusty and Grideline, though of no great value, are yet such as the poet intended. Sir 20 Trusty's account of the death of Rosamond is, I think, too grossly absurd. The whole drama is airy and elegant, engaging in its process, and pleasing in its conclusion. If Addison had cultivated the lighter parts of poetry, he would probably have excelled. 25

The tragedy of 'Cato,' which, contrary to the rule observed in selecting the works of other poets, has by the weight of its character forced its way into the late collection, is unquestionably the noblest production of Addison's genius. Of a work so much read it is 30 difficult to say anything new. About things on which the public thinks long, it commonly attains to think

right; and of 'Cato' it has been not unjustly determined that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language than a representation of natural affections or of any state probable or possible in human life. Nothing here "excites or assuages emotion"; here is "no magical power of raising phantastic terror or wild anxiety." The events are expected without solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow.

10 Of the agents we have no care; we consider not what they are doing or what they are suffering; we wish only to know what they have to say. Cato is a being above our solicitude—a man of whom the gods take care, and whom we leave to their care with heed-

15 less confidence. To the rest, neither gods nor men can have much attention; for there is not one amongst them that strongly attracts either affection or esteem. But they are made the vehicles of such sentiments and such expression that there is scarcely a scene in

20 the play which the reader does not wish to impress upon his memory.

When 'Cato' was shown to Pope,<sup>1</sup> he advised the author to print it without any theatrical exhibition, supposing that it would be read more favourably

25 than heard. Addison declared himself of the same opinion, but urged the importunity of his friends for its appearance on the stage. The emulation of parties made it successful beyond expectation, and its success has introduced or confirmed among us the use of

30 dialogue too declamatory, of unassuming elegance and chill philosophy. The universality of applause, how-

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

ever it might quell the censure of common mortals, had no other effect than to harden Dennis in fixed dislike; but his dislike was not merely capricious. He found and showed many faults; he showed them indeed with anger, but he found them with acuteness, 5 such as ought to rescue his criticism from oblivion, though at last it will have no other life than it derives from the work which it endeavours to oppress. Why he pays no regard to the opinion of the audience, he gives his reason by remarking that— 10

“A deference is to be paid to a general applause when it appears that that applause is natural and spontaneous; but that little regard is to be had to it when it is affected and artificial. Of all the tragedies which in his memory have had vast and violent runs, 15 not one has been excellent, few have been tolerable, most have been scandalous. When a poet writes a tragedy who knows he has judgment, and who feels he has genius, that poet presumes upon his own merit, and scorns to make a cabal. That people come coolly 20 to the representation of such a tragedy, without any violent expectation, or delusive imagination, or invincible prepossession; that such an audience is liable to receive the impressions which the poem shall naturally make in them, and to judge by their own reason 25 and their own judgments, and that reason and judgment are calm and serene, not formed by nature to make proselytes, and to control and lord it over the imaginations of others. But that when an author writes a tragedy who knows he has neither genius nor judgment, he has recourse to the making a party, and he endeavours to make up in industry what is wanting 30

in talent, and to supply by poetical craft the absence of poetical art: that such an author is humbly contented to raise men's passions by a plot without doors, since he despairs of doing it by that which he brings  
5 upon the stage. That party and passion and prepossession are clamorous and tumultuous things, and so much the more clamorous and tumultuous by how much the more erroneous: that they domineer and tyrannise over the imaginations of persons who want  
10 judgment, and sometimes too of those who have it, and, like a fierce and outrageous torrent, bear down all opposition before them."

He then condemns the neglect of poetical justice, which is always one of his favourite principles:—

15 "'Tis certainly the duty of every tragic poet, by the exact distribution of poetical justice, to imitate the Divine Dispensation and to inculcate a particular Providence. 'Tis true, indeed, upon the stage of the world the wicked sometimes prosper and the guilt-  
20 less suffer. But that is permitted by the Governor of the world to show, from the attribute of his infinite justice, that there is a compensation in futurity, to prove the immortality of the human soul, and the certainty of future rewards and punishments. But  
25 the poetical persons in tragedy exist no longer than the reading or the representation; the whole extent of their entity is circumscribed by those; and therefore, during that reading or representation, according to their merits or demerits, they must be punished or  
30 rewarded. If this is not done, there is no impartial distribution of poetical justice, no instructive lecture of a particular Providence, and no imitation of the



Divine Dispensation. And yet the author of this tragedy does not only run counter to this in the fate of his principal character, but everywhere throughout it makes virtue suffer and vice triumph; for not only Cato is vanquished by Cæsar, but the treachery and perfidiousness of Syphax prevails over the honest simplicity and the credulity of Juba, and the sly subtlety and dissimulation of Portius over the generous frankness and open-heartedness of Marcus." 5

Whatever pleasure there may be in seeing crimes 10 punished and virtue rewarded, yet, since wickedness often prospers in real life, the poet is certainly at liberty to give it prosperity on the stage. For if poetry has an imitation of reality, how are its laws broken by exhibiting the world in its true form? The stage may 15 sometimes gratify our wishes; but if it be truly the "mirror of life," it ought to show us sometimes what we are to expect. Dennis objects to the characters that they are not natural or reasonable; but as heroes and heroines are not beings that are seen every day, 20 it is hard to find upon what principles their conduct shall be tried. It is, however, not useless to consider what he says of the manner in which Cato receives the account of his son's death:—

"Nor is the grief of Cato in the fourth act one jot 25 more in nature than that of his son and Lucia in the third. Cato receives the news of his son's death not only with dry eyes, but with a sort of satisfaction; and in the same page sheds tears for the calamity of his country, and does the same thing in the next page 30 upon the bare apprehension of the danger of his friends. Now, since the love of one's country is the love of

one's countrymen, as I have shown upon another occasion, I desire to ask these questions: Of all our countrymen, which do we love most, those whom we know or those whom we know not? And of those  
5 whom we know, which do we cherish most, our friends or our enemies? And of our friends, which are the dearest to us, those who are related to us or those who are not? And of all our relations, for which have we most tenderness, for those who are near to us or  
10 for those who are remote? And of our near relations, which are the nearest, and consequently the dearest to us, our offspring, or others? Our offspring, most certainly; as nature, or in other words Providence, has wisely contrived for the preservation of mankind. Now,  
15 does it not follow from what has been said that for a man to receive the news of his son's death with dry eyes, and to weep at the same time for the calamities of his country, is a wretched affectation and a miserable inconsistency? Is not that, in plain English, to re-  
20 ceive with dry eyes the news of the deaths of those for whose sake our country is a name so dear to us, and at the same time to shed tears for those for whose sakes our country is not a name so dear to us?"

But this formidable assailant is least resistible when  
25 he attacks the probability of the action and the reasonableness of the plan. Every critical reader must remark that Addison has, with a scrupulosity almost unexampled on the English stage, confined himself in time to a single day, and in place to rigorous unity.  
30 The scene never changes, and the whole action of the play passes in the great hall of Cato's house at Utica. Much, therefore, is done in the hall, for which any

other place had been more fit ; and this impropriety affords Dennis many hints of merriment and opportunities of triumph. The passage is long ; but as such disquisitions are not common, and the objections are skilfully formed and vigorously urged, those who delight 5 in critical controversy will not think it tedious :—

“ Upon the departure of Portius, Sempronius makes but one soliloquy, and immediately in comes Syphax, and then the two politicians are at it immediately. They lay their heads together, with their snuff-boxes in 10 their hands, as Mr Bayes has it, and league it away. But in the midst of that wise scene, Syphax seems to give a seasonable caution to Sempronius—

‘*Syph.* But is it true, Sempronius, that your senate  
Is call’d together? Gods ! thou must be cautious,  
Cato has piercing eyes.’ 15

There is a great deal of caution shown, indeed, in meeting in a governor’s own hall to carry on their plot against him. Whatever opinion they have of his eyes, I suppose they have none of his ears, or they would 20 never have talked at this foolish rate so near.

‘Gods ! thou must be cautious.’

Oh yes, very cautious ; for if Cato should overhear you, and turn you off for politicians, Cæsar would never take you,—no, Cæsar would never take you. 25

“When Cato, Act ii., turns the senators out of the hall, upon pretence of acquainting Juba with the result of their debates, he appears to me to do a thing which is neither reasonable nor civil. Juba might certainly have better been made acquainted with the result of 30 that debate in some private apartment of the palace.

But the poet was driven upon this absurdity to make way for another—and that is, to give Juba an opportunity to demand Marcia of her father. But the quarrel and rage of Juba and Syphax in the same act ;  
5 the invectives of Syphax against the Romans and Cato ; the advice that he gives Juba, in her father's hall, to bear away Marcia by force ; and his brutal and clamorous rage upon his refusal, and at a time when Cato was scarce out of sight, and perhaps not out of hearing  
10 —at least some of his guards or domestics must necessarily be supposed to be within hearing,—is a thing that is so far from being probable that it is hardly possible.

“Sempronius, in the second act, comes back once more in the same morning to the governor's hall, to  
15 carry on the conspiracy with Syphax against the governor, his country, and his family, which is so stupid that it is below the wisdom of the O——s, the Macs, and the Teagues ; even Eustace Commins himself would never have gone to Justice-hall to have conspired against the Government. If officers at Ports-  
20 mouth should lay their heads together in order to the carrying off J—— G——'s niece or daughter, would they meet in J—— G——'s hall to carry on that conspiracy ? There would be no necessity for their meet-  
25 ing there, at least till they came to the execution of their plot, because there would be other places to meet in. There would be no probability that they should meet there, because there would be places more private and more commodious. Now, there  
30 ought to be nothing in a tragical action but what is necessary or probable.

“But treason is not the only thing that is carried on

in this hall : that, and love, and philosophy take their turns in it, without any manner of necessity or probability occasioned by the action, as duly and as regularly, without interrupting one another, as if there were a triple league between them, and a mutual agreement 5 that each should give place to, and make way for, the other in a due and orderly succession.

“We now come to the third act. Sempronius in this act comes into the governor’s hall with the leaders of the mutiny ; but as soon as Cato is gone, Sempronius, who but just before had acted like an unparalleled knave, discovers himself, like an egregious fool, to be an accomplice in the conspiracy :— 10

‘*Semp.* Know, villains, when such paltry slaves presume To mix in treason, if the plot succeeds, 15 They’re thrown neglected by ; but if it fails, They’re sure to die like dogs, as you shall do. Here, take these factious monsters, drag them forth To sudden death.’

“’Tis true, indeed, the second leader says there are 20 none there but friends ; but is that possible at such a juncture ? Can a parcel of rogues attempt to assassinate the governor of a town of war in his own house in mid-day ? and, after they are discovered and defeated, can there be none near them but friends ? Is it not 25 plain from these words of Sempronius—

‘Here, take these factious monsters, drag them forth To sudden death’—

and from the entrance of the guards upon the word of command, that those guards were within earshot ? 30 Behold Sempronius then palpably discovered. How

comes it to pass, then, that instead of being hanged up with the rest, he remains secure in the governor's hall, and there carries on his conspiracy against the Government, the third time in the same day, with his old  
 5 comrade Syphax, who enters at the same time that the guards are carrying away the leaders, big with the news of the defeat of Sempronius, though where he had his intelligence so soon is difficult to imagine? And now the reader may expect a very extraordinary scene;  
 10 there is not abundance of spirit, indeed, nor a great deal of passion, but there is wisdom more than enough to supply all defects.

‘*Syph.* Our first design, my friend, has proved abortive ;  
 Still there remains an after-game to play :  
 15 My troops are mounted, their Numidian steeds  
 Snuff up the winds, and long to scour the desert.  
 Let but Sempronius lead us in our flight,  
 We'll force the gate, where Marcus keeps his guard,  
 And hew down all that would oppose our passage ;  
 20 A day will bring us into Cæsar's camp.  
*Semp.* Confusion ! I have fail'd of half my purpose ;  
 Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind.’

Well—but though he tells us the half-purpose that he has failed of, he does not tell us the half that  
 25 he has carried. But what does he mean by—

‘Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind’ ?

He is now in her own house, and we have neither seen her nor heard of her anywhere else since the play began. But now let us hear Syphax—

30 ‘What hinders then, but that thou find her out,  
 And hurry her away by manly force?’

But what does old Syphax mean by finding her out? They talk as if she were as hard to be found as a hare in a frosty morning.

‘*Semp.* But how to gain admission?’

Oh! she is found out then, it seems.

5

‘But how to gain admission? for access  
Is giv’n to none but Juba and her brothers.’

But, railleury apart, why access to Juba? For he was owned and received as a lover neither by the father nor by the daughter. Well! but let that pass. Syphax 10 puts Sempronius out of pain immediately; and, being a Numidian, abounding in wiles, supplies him with a stratagem for admission that, I believe, is a nonpareil—

‘*Syph.* Thou shalt have Juba’s dress and Juba’s guards;  
The doors will open when Numidia’s prince  
Seems to appear before them.’

15

Sempronius is, it seems, to pass for Juba in full day at Cato’s house, where they were both so very well known, by having Juba’s dress and his guards: as if one of the marshals of France could pass for the 20 Duke of Bavaria at noonday, at Versailles, by having his dress and liveries. But how does Syphax pretend to help Sempronius to young Juba’s dress? Does he serve him in a double capacity, as general and master of his wardrobe? But why Juba’s guards? For the 25 devil of any guards has Juba appeared with yet. Well! though this is a mighty politic invention, yet, methinks, they might have done without it; for, since the advice that Syphax gave to Sempronius was—

‘To hurry her away by manly force,’

30

in my opinion the shortest and likeliest way of coming at the lady was by demolishing, instead of putting on an impertinent disguise to circumvent, two or three slaves. But Sempronius, it seems, is of another opinion. He  
5 extols to the skies the invention of old Syphax—

‘*Semp.* Heavens ! what a thought was there !’

“Now, I appeal to the reader if I have not been as good as my word. Did I not tell him that I would lay before him a very wise scene?

- 10 “But now let us lay before the reader that part of the scenery of the fourth act which may show the absurdities which the author has run into, through the indiscreet observance of the unity of place. I do not remember that Aristotle has said anything expressly  
15 concerning the unity of place. ’Tis true implicitly he has said enough in the rules which he has laid down for the chorus. For, by making the chorus an essential part of tragedy, and by bringing it on the stage immediately after the opening of the scene, and retaining  
20 it there till the very catastrophe, he has so determined and fixed the place of action that it was impossible for an author on the Grecian stage to break through that unity. I am of opinion that, if a modern tragic poet can preserve the unity of place without destroying the  
25 probability of the incidents, ’tis always best for him to do it ; because by the preservation of that unity, as we have taken notice above, he adds grace and cleanness and comeliness to the representation. But since there are no express rules about it, and we are under no  
30 compulsion to keep it, since we have no chorus as the Grecian poet had ; if it cannot be preserved without



rendering the greater part of the incidents unreasonable and absurd, and perhaps sometimes monstrous, 'tis certainly better to break it.

"Now comes bully Sempronius, comically accoutred and equipped with his Numidian dress and his Numidian guards. Let the reader attend to him with all his ears, for the words of the wise are precious— 5

*'Semp. The deer is lodged, I've track'd her to her covert.'*

Now I would fain know why this deer is said to be lodged, since we have not heard one word since the play began of her being at all out of harbour; and if we consider the discourse with which she and Lucia begin the act, we have reason to believe that they had hardly been talking of such matters in the street. However, to pleasure Sempronius, let us suppose for once that the deer is lodged— 10 15

*'The deer is lodged, I've track'd her to her covert.'*

If he had seen her in the open field, what occasion had he to track her when he had so many Numidian dogs at his heels, which, with one halloo, he might have set upon her haunches? If he did not see her in the open field, how could he possibly track her? If he had seen her in the street, why did he not set upon her in the street, since through the street she must be carried at last? Now here, instead of having his thoughts upon his business and upon the present danger; instead of meditating and contriving how he shall pass with his mistress through the southern gate, where her brother Marcus is upon the guard, and where she would certainly prove an impediment to him, 20 25 30

which is the Roman word for the *baggage*,—instead of doing this, Sempronius is entertaining himself with whimsies :—

- ‘*Semp.* How will the young Numidian rave to see  
 5 His mistress lost ! If aught could glad my soul,  
 Beyond th’ enjoyment of so bright a prize,  
 ’Twould be to torture that young gay barbarian.  
 But hark ! what noise ? Death to my hopes ! ’tis he,  
 ’Tis Juba’s self ! There is but one way left !  
 10 He must be murder’d, and a passage cut  
 Through those his guards.’

Pray, what are ‘those his guards’ ? I thought at present that Juba’s guards had been Sempronius’s tools, and had been dangling after his heels.

- 15 “But now let us sum up all these absurdities together. Sempronius goes at noonday, in Juba’s clothes and with Juba’s guards, to Cato’s palace, in order to pass for Juba, in a place where they were both so very well known : he meets Juba there, and  
 20 resolves to murder him with his own guards. Upon the guards appearing a little bashful, he threatens them—

‘Hah ! dastards, do you tremble !  
 Or act like men ; or, by yon azure heav’n !’

- 25 But the guards still remaining restive, Sempronius himself attacks Juba, while each of the guards is representing Mr Spectator’s sign of the Gaper, awed, it seems, and terrified by Sempronius’s threats. Juba kills Sempronius and takes his own army prisoners,  
 30 and carries them in triumph away to Cato. Now, I would fain know if any part of Mr Bayes’s tragedy is so full of absurdity as this ?

“Upon hearing the clash of swords, Lucia and

Marcia come in. The question is, why no men come in upon hearing the noise of swords in the governor's hall? Where was the governor himself? Where were his guards? Where were his servants? Such an attempt as this, so near the person of a governor 5  
of a place of war, was enough to alarm the whole garrison; and yet, for almost half an hour after Sempronius was killed, we find none of those appear who were the likeliest in the world to be alarmed, and the noise of swords is made to draw only two 10  
poor women thither, who were most certain to run away from it. Upon Lucia and Marcia's coming in, Lucia appears in all the symptoms of an hysterical gentlewoman :—

*'Luc.* Sure 'twas the clash of swords! my troubled heart 15  
Is so cast down and sunk amidst its sorrows,  
It throbs with fear, and aches at every sound!'

And immediately her old whimsy returns upon her :—

*'O Marcia, should thy brothers, for my sake—* 20  
*I die away with horror at the thought.'*

She fancies that there can be no cutting of throats but it must be for her. If this is tragical, I would fain know what is comical. Well! upon this they spy the body of Sempronius; and Marcia, deluded by the habit, it seems, takes him for Juba; for, says she— 25

*'The face is muffled up within the garment.'*

Now, how a man could fight and fall, with his face muffled up in his garment, is, I think, a little hard to conceive! Besides, Juba, before he killed him, knew him to be Sempronius. It was not by his gar- 30

ment that he knew this ; it was by his face, then : his face therefore was not muffled. Upon seeing this man with the muffled face Marcia falls a-raving, and, owning her passion for the supposed defunct, begins to  
5 make his funeral oration. Upon which Juba enters listening, I suppose on tiptoe ; for I cannot imagine how any one can enter listening in any other posture. I would fain know how it came to pass that, during all this time, he had sent nobody—no, not so much as a  
10 candle-snuffer—to take away the dead body of Sempronius. Well ! but let us regard him listening. Having left his apprehension behind him, he at first applies what Marcia says to Sempronius. But finding at last, with much ado, that he himself is the happy man, he  
15 quits his eavesdropping, and greedily intercepts the bliss which was fondly designed for one who could not be the better for it. But here I must ask a question : how comes Juba to listen here, who had not listened before throughout the play ? Or how  
20 comes he to be the only person of this tragedy who listens, when love and treason were so often talked in so public a place as a hall ? I am afraid the author was driven upon all these absurdities only to introduce this miserable mistake of Marcia, which,  
25 after all, is much below the dignity of tragedy, as anything is which is the effect or result of trick.

“But let us come to the scenery of the fifth act. Cato appears first upon the scene, sitting in a thoughtful posture ; in his hand Plato’s treatise on the Im-  
30 mortality of the Soul, a drawn sword on the table by him. Now let us consider the place in which this sight is presented to us. The place, forsooth, is a

long hall. Let us suppose that any one should place himself in this posture in the midst of one of our halls in London; that he should appear *solus*, in a sullen posture, a drawn sword on the table by him, in his hand Plato's treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, translated lately by Bernard Lintot : I desire the reader to consider whether such a person as this would pass with them who beheld him for a great patriot, a great philosopher, or a general, or for some whimsical person who fancied himself all these, and whether the people who belonged to the family would think that such a person had a design upon their midriffs or his own. 5 10

"In short, that Cato should sit long enough in the aforesaid posture, in the midst of this large hall, to read over Plato's treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, which is a lecture of two long hours ; that he should propose to himself to be private there upon that occasion ; that he should be angry with his son for intruding there ; then, that he should leave this hall upon the pretence of sleep, give himself the mortal wound in his bedchamber, and then be brought back into that hall to expire, purely to show his good breeding and save his friends the trouble of coming up to his bedchamber,—all this appears to me to be improbable, incredible, impossible." 15 20 25

Such is the censure of Dennis. There is, as Dryden expresses it, perhaps "too much horseplay in his raillery" ; but if his jests are coarse, his arguments are strong. Yet, as we love better to be pleased than be taught, Cato is read and the critic is neglected. Flushed with consciousness of these detections of 30

absurdity in the conduct, he afterwards attacked the sentiments of Cato ; but he then amused himself with petty cavils and minute objections.

Of Addison's smaller poems no particular mention  
5 is necessary ; they have little that can employ or require a critic. The parallel of the princes and gods in his verses to Kneller is often happy, but is too well known to be quoted. His translations, so far as I have compared them, want the exactness of a scholar.  
10 That he understood his authors cannot be doubted ; but his versions will not teach others to understand them, being too licentiously paraphrastical. They are, however, for the most part, smooth and easy, and, what is the first excellence of a translator, such as may  
15 be read with pleasure by those who do not know the originals. His poetry is polished and pure, the product of a mind too judicious to commit faults, but not sufficiently vigorous to attain excellence. He has sometimes a striking line or a shining paragraph ; but  
20 in the whole he is warm rather than fervid, and shows more dexterity than strength. He was, however, one of our earliest examples of correctness. The versification which he had learned from Dryden he debased rather than refined. His rhymes are often dissonant ;  
25 in his Georgic he admits broken lines. He uses both triplets and Alexandrines, but triplets more frequently in his translations than his other works. The mere structure of verses seems never to have engaged much of his care. But his lines are very smooth  
30 in 'Rosamond,' and too smooth in 'Cato.'

Addison is now to be considered as a critic, a name which the present generation is scarcely willing to allow

him. His criticism is condemned as tentative or experimental rather than scientific, and he is considered as deciding by taste rather than by principles.

It is not uncommon for those who have grown wise by the labour of others to add a little of their own and overlook their masters. Addison is now despised by some who perhaps would never have seen his defects but by the lights which he afforded them. That he always wrote as he would think it necessary to write now, cannot be affirmed; his instructions were such as the characters of his readers made proper. That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk was in his time rarely to be found. Men not professing learning were not ashamed of ignorance; and, in the female world, any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censured. His purpose was to infuse literary curiosity, by gentle and unsuspected conveyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy; he therefore presented knowledge in the most alluring form, not lofty and austere, but accessible and familiar. When he showed them their defects, he showed them likewise that they might be easily supplied. His attempt succeeded; inquiry was awakened and comprehension expanded. An emulation of intellectual elegance was excited, and from his time to our own life has been gradually exalted, and conversation purified and enlarged. Dryden had, not many years before, scattered criticism over his prefaces with very little parsimony; but though he sometimes condescended to be somewhat familiar, his manner was in general too scholastic for those who had yet their rudiments to learn, and found it not easy to understand

their master. His observations were framed rather for those that were learning to write than for those that read only to talk.

An instructor like Addison was now wanting, whose  
5 remarks, being superficial, might be easily understood, and being just, might prepare the mind for more attainments. Had he presented 'Paradise Lost' to the public with all the pomp of system and severity of science, the criticism would perhaps have been admired  
10 and the poem still have been neglected; but by the blandishments of gentleness and facility he has made Milton an universal favourite, with whom readers of every class think it necessary to be pleased. He descended now and then to lower disquisitions; and by  
15 a serious display of the beauties of 'Chevy Chase,' exposed himself to the ridicule of Wagstaff, who bestowed a like pompous character on 'Tom Thumb'; and to the contempt of Dennis, who, considering the fundamental position of his criticism, that 'Chevy Chase' pleases,  
20 and ought to please, because it is natural, observes, "that there is a way of deviating from nature, by bombast or tumour, which soars above nature, and enlarges images beyond their real bulk; by affectation, which forsakes nature in quest of something unsuitable; and  
25 by imbecility, which degrades nature by faintness and diminution, by obscuring its appearances and weakening its effects." In 'Chevy Chase' there is not much of either bombast or affectation, but there is chill and lifeless imbecility. The story cannot possibly be told  
30 in a manner that shall make less impression on the mind.

Before the profound observers of the present race



repose too securely on the consciousness of their superiority to Addison, let them consider his 'Remarks on Ovid,' in which may be found specimens of criticism sufficiently subtle and refined ; let them peruse likewise his Essays on Wit, and on the Pleasures of Imagination, 5 in which he founds art on the base of nature, and draws the principles of invention from dispositions inherent in the mind of man with skill and elegance, such as his contemners will not easily attain.

As a describer of life and manners he must be 10 allowed to stand perhaps the first of the first rank. His humour, which, as Steele observes, is peculiar to himself, is so happily diffused as to give the grace of novelty to domestic scenes and daily occurrences. He never "outsteps the modesty of nature," nor raises 15 merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. His figures neither divert by distortion nor amaze by aggravation. He copies life with so much fidelity that he can be hardly said to invent, yet his exhibitions have an air so much original that it is difficult to suppose 20 them not merely the product of imagination.

As a teacher of wisdom he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in it enthusiastic or superstitious ; he appears neither weakly credulous nor wantonly sceptical ; his morality is neither danger- 25 ously lax nor impracticably rigid. All the enchantment of fancy and all the cogency of argument are employed to recommend to the reader his real interest, the care of pleasing the Author of his being. Truth is shown sometimes as the phantom of a vision, some- 30 times appears half-veiled in an allegory ; sometimes attracts regard in the robes of fancy, and sometimes

steps forth in the confidence of reason. She wears a thousand dresses, and in all is pleasing.

*Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.*

His prose is the model of the middle style ; on  
5 grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not  
grovelling ; pure without scrupulosity, and exact with-  
out apparent elaboration ; always equable and always  
easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences.  
Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a  
10 grace ; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no  
hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous,  
but never blazes in unexpected splendour.

It was apparently his principal endeavour to avoid  
all harshness and severity of diction ; he is therefore  
15 sometimes verbose in his transitions and connections,  
and sometimes descends too much to the language of  
conversation ; yet if his language had been less idio-  
matical, it might have lost somewhat of its genuine  
Anglicism. What he attempted he performed ; he  
20 is never feeble, and he did not wish to be energetic ;  
he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sen-  
tences have neither studied amplitude nor affected  
brevity ; his periods, though not diligently rounded,  
are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to attain an  
25 English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant  
but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to  
the volumes of Addison.

## NOTES TO LIFE OF MILTON.

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3. 4. **Elijah Fenton** (1683-1730) prefixed a short life of Milton to his edition of Milton's poems. Fenton helped Pope to translate the 'Odyssey,' and was honoured with an epitaph by Pope, which Johnson criticises towards the end of his life of Pope.

3. 6. **this edition**—*i.e.*, of the 'Lives of the Poets.'

3. 10. **York and Lancaster.** The Wars of the Roses in the fifteenth century.

3. 12. **the White Rose**, by metonymy for the Yorkists.

**grandfather.** Richard Milton, not John (Masson's edition of Milton's Poetical Works, i. 296).

3. 13. **Shotover**, near Oxford. The word is an interesting corruption of Fr. *château vert* (green country-house).

3. 17. **scrivener**, a notary, writer. The old form was *scriven* or *scrivein*, through the O.F. *escrivain* from Low Lat. *scribanus*.

4. 2. **literature.** We should now use "learning" in this phrase.

4. 4. **Caston.** She was probably a Jeffrey according to later investigations.

4. 18. **secondary**, deputy.

**John and Edward.** Edward Philips was Milton's elder nephew, and published a life of his uncle in 1694.

4. 23. **the Spread Eagle.** These were the days before houses were numbered. Prof. Masson remarks, "The scrivener Milton had a sign as well as his neighbours" (Life of Milton).

4. 27. **Young.** Educated at University of St Andrews; became a noted Puritan divine.

4. 31. **St Paul's school.** Founded in 1512 by Colet. Dr Gill of Corpus Christi, Oxford, was its eighth head-master.

**5. 2. A sizar** at Cambridge used to correspond to the "servitor" in Oxford. He was admitted into college at a lower rate with a "size" or allowance of provisions granted him, and with the duty of serving out "sizes." *Size* is a short term of assize (L. *assidère*). Milton, however, was a "lesser pensioner," and so of higher academic rank ("admissus est pensionarius minor"—College Register).

**5. 5. Politian.** Poliziano was (1454-1494) a noted figure in the Italian Revival of Learning, and a favourite of Lorenzo the Magnificent. He was a skilled writer of Latin verse.

**5. 9. Cowley.** Abraham Cowley (1618-1667) was a boy wonder. When fifteen he published 'Poetical Blossomes.' "A great poet," Dryden calls him; but Pope in 1737 asks, "Who now reads Cowley?" Probably to-day his Essays are better known than his 'Davideis' or the 'Mistress.' His deepest mark on literature was made by the introduction of "Pindarique Odes," which remained in vogue for a century.

**5. 16. numerous school,** well attended.

**5. 22. Polybius.** A Greek political prisoner in Italy in the second century B.C., who won Scipio's friendship, and wrote in Greek forty books about the period from the Second Punic War to the loss of Greek freedom (220-146 B.C.) Hampton's translation (1756-1761) was in its day the completest English translation of Polybius. Dr Johnson himself reviewed it in the 'Literary Magazine.' It went through at least seven editions before 1823 (Shuckburgh's Pref. to trans. of Polybius, 1889).

**5. 23. revival of letters.** The renewed interest in classic, and especially Greek, literature, in the fifteenth century. It was a movement of manifold phases, affecting the whole culture of Europe. The student should consult such works as Symonds' 'Renaissance in Italy,' and Pater's 'Renaissance.'

**5. 26. Haddon.** Walter Haddon, Professor of Civil Law, Cambridge; later President of Magdalen, Oxford. He acted as Elizabeth's envoy to the Netherlands. Hallam ('Introduction to Lit. of Europe,' chap. x.) regards his Latinity as too "florid."

**Ascham.** Roger Ascham had been Elizabeth's tutor, and was afterwards her Latin secretary; was author of 'Toxophilus' and the 'Scholemaster.'

**5. 30. Alabaster's 'Roxana.'** A tragedy in Latin written by

William Alabaster about forty years before its publication in 1632. Hallam mentions its original as Groto's Italian tragedy 'Dalida' ('Lit. of Europe,' chap. xxii.)

**6. 3. no great fondness.** This needs qualification. The wilder men at Christ's sneered at the fair-complexioned and gentle Milton as "the lady"; but the best of his teachers and fellow-students respected him.

**6. 9. corporal correction.** This "silly tale" is disputed by Blackburne in his 'Remarks on Johnson's Life of Milton,' 1780, and is dismissed by Masson as a "MS. jotting of the old gossip Aubrey."

**6. 13. Diodati.** Charles Diodāti, sprung from an Italian Protestant family, was Milton's bosom-friend in youth. To him was addressed Milton's 'Elegia Prima,' and on him was written the 'Epitaphium Damonis.'

**7. 13. scheme of education.** This is his 'Tractate of Education.' The scheme is set forth in a letter to "Master Hartlib" in 1644 (Milton's Prose Works, Bohn, iii. 462 *sqq.*) Samuel Hartlib was a merchant of Polish ancestry, "sent hither by some good providence from a far country," says Milton.

**7. 14. academical instruction**—*i.e.*, education at a university. *Academīa* ('Ακαδημία) meant the sacred groves of the hero Academus near Athens, where Plato taught.

**7. 18. 'Way to remove Hirelings,'** published 1659. Neither title nor quotation is absolutely accurate (see Milton's Prose Works, Bohn, iii. 1 *sqq.*) The words "the profits . . . uses" are Johnson's, not Milton's, and refer to statute of mortmain forbidding conveyances to religious houses.

**7. 32. Trincalos.** "He evidently refers to Albumazar, acted at Cambridge in 1614" (note in Murphy's edition of Johnson's Works, ed. 1810, vol. ix.) Milton would have equally condemned 'Ignoramus,' a comedy of trickery somewhat after the model of Plautus, and acted at Cambridge in the same year, 1614. It admits Latin like "Quota est clocka nunc? Inter octo et nina." The jesting Trinculo of Shakespeare's 'Tempest' is a strikingly similar name to that in the text.

**8. 13. retch,** vomit (A.S. *hræcan*, from *hræc*, a cough). Distinguish *reach*, from A.S. *ræcan*.

**8. 18. Articles.** The Thirty-nine Articles of faith accepted by the Church of England.

8. 26. **suspended**, hesitating, halting.

9. 6. **all the Greek and Latin writers**. Milton's own words are, "There I spent a complete holiday in turning over the Greek and Latin writers." He does not say "all."

9. 11. **masque**. The older spelling was *mask* or *maske*. Ben Jonson, the greatest of our masque writers, adopted the French form *masque*. This special form of dramatic entertainment was so called from the *mask* or visor employed by performers. Its distinctive character was the dance by disguised performers: dialogue and singing were subordinate. The name was introduced into England about 1513. The Fr. *masquerade* comes through Sp. *mascarada*, from Arab. *mashkarat*, buffoon (Skeat's Dict.; Evans' 'English Masques').

9. 15. **Circe**, the enchantress of the 'Odyssey' (Book X.), who turned the crews of Odysseus into swine. Other suggested sources are the 'Comus' of Erycius Puteanus, published at Louvain 1611, and at Oxford 1634; and the 'Old Wives' Tale' of George Peele. The "fiction," as Johnson calls it, was founded on fact; for the earl's sons and daughter had been benighted once in Herefordshire.

9. 18. **a quo**. The Latin lines are applied by Ovid (Amor. iii. 9. 25) to "Mæonides"—i.e., Homer—as a well of inspiration for all bards.

9. 20. '**Lycidas**' should be compared with the other great elegies in English literature—Shelley's 'Adonais,' Tennyson's 'In Memoriam,' and Matthew Arnold's 'Thyrsis.'

9. 21. **King**. Edward King, a promising Fellow of Christ's, was shipwrecked and drowned in 1637 off the Welsh coast when bound for Ireland.

9. 23. **much a favourite**, an old-fashioned turn for "a great favourite."

9. 24. **wits** means intellectual, cultured men, as usually in Johnson.

**joined**—i.e., in a volume published 1638. The list of contributors of the Greek, Latin, and English poems in memory of King is given in Masson's edition of Milton's Poetical Works, i. 192.

9. 27. **rules of Tuscan poetry**—e.g., in such an Italian form as the canzone.

10. 9. **Wotton** (1568-1639), diplomatist and poet; was despatched on many political missions to the Continent, and became Provost

of Eton, 1624. Izaak Walton (of the 'Compleat Angler') edited his poems and wrote his biography.

10. 13. **Scudamore**, English ambassador to France.

10. 14. **Grotius** (Latinised for Van Groot), theologian and jurist (1583-1645), one of the greatest Dutch scholars. His great work was 'De Jure Belli et Pacis.'

10. 15. **Christina**, the queen who later in life, 1654, voluntarily abdicated the throne of Sweden.

10. 18. **perambulation** of the country. Lat. *perambulare*, to walk through. A rather Johnsonian expression for a "journey."

10. 27. **they should not willingly let it die**: these noble words are from Milton's 'Reason of Church Government.'

11. 2. **waste of time**—i.e., the ravages of time. Cf. sense of devastation (L. *vastare*), "waste land," and the opening line of one of Shakespeare's great sonnets, "The expense of spirit in a *waste* of shame."

11. 5. **Carlo Dati** and **Francini** are two of seven Florentine literary men named by Milton as "friends whose merits he could never forget" (Masson, Milton's Poetical Works, i. 11).

11. 6. **tumid lapidary style**—swelling phrases fitted for a monumental inscription. *Lapidary*, from L. *lapid-em*, a stone.

11. 14. **Barberini**, nephew and adviser of Pope Urban.

11. 17. **distich**, a couplet; **tetrastrich**, a quatrain. Both words are compounds of the Gr. *στίχος*, a line. Old editions spell *distich*, but *tetrastick*!

11. 22. **Italian testimonies**. They are given in Masson's edition of Milton's Poetical Works, i. 473 *sqq.* It may be enough to quote Selvaggi's distich:—

"Græcia Mæonidem, iacet sibi Roma Maronem;  
Anglia Miltonum iactat utrique parem."

11. 30. **too short**. Johnson writes with feeling here: he often longed to visit Italy, and, as we learn from Boswell, it was a great disappointment when the projected tour to Italy with the Thrales fell through.

12. 4. **Torquato Tasso** (1544-1595), most famous for his 'Gerusalemme Liberata,' an epic of the great crusade against the Saracens.

12. 8. **a Latin poem**, entitled 'Mansus.' One of the most

interesting points in these hundred hexameters is Milton's desire to write about King Arthur :—

“ Si quando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,  
Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem.”

**12. 17. liberty, boldness, outspoken character.**

**12. 22. Galileo (1564-1642),** astronomer and poet, had been more than once in collision with the Church owing to his scientific doctrines. He had been “a prisoner” in 1633, but was now (1639) living at his own villa near Florence.

**13. 1. the metropolis of orthodoxy,** because of the Continental Reformers who lived there.

**13. 3. John Diodati,** uncle of Milton's young medical friend Charles Diodati.

**13. 6. At his return.** Milton more probably had been told of the death by Jean Diodati at Geneva in June 1639; for Charles was buried in August 1638 (Register of Parish of St Anne, Blackfriars, quoted by Masson). Milton must have yearned to talk over his Italian experiences with his half-Italian friend, and his death was a severe blow. It is one of the ironies of Milton's biography that the world thinks of King as his great friend, because ‘Lycidas’ is so much better known than the ‘Epitaphium Damonis’ in memory of Diodati.

**13. 11. childish imitation of pastoral life.** Johnson's attitude towards pastoral poetry is best appreciated in his unfavourable criticisms on ‘Lycidas.’

**13. 26. vapours away his patriotism.** Johnson will not choose to realise that Milton could serve the cause of Puritanism and the Commonwealth better in his study than in a camp. This part of Johnson's ‘Milton’ is stoutly attacked in Blackburne's ‘Remarks’ (1780), as illustrating what he calls Johnson's “mean flings and malevolent surmises on Milton's most indifferent actions.” Consult the Introduction on Johnson's Attitude to Milton.

**14. 3. no wise man . . . disgraceful.** Johnson again writes with feeling. I have often read with a curious thrill his own advertisement in the ‘Gentleman's Magazine’ for July 1736: “At Edial, near Litchfield in Staffordshire, Young Gentlemen are Boarded and Taught the Latin and Greek Languages by Samuel Johnson.”

**14. 17. “to recall . . . misapprehension.”** The paragraph



ends with a good example of the "pompous triads" to which Macaulay refers in his 'Life of Johnson.' In the three phrases each infinitive, adjective, and noun are carefully balanced.

**14. 23. the Georgic.** The four Georgics of Virgil are written in hexameters in his most finished style on rural subjects (crops, tree-growing, cattle, and bees).

**14. 26. projectors,** lit., those who form projects, drawers of schemes; often transferred to visionary schemers, and so used by Addison in the 'Spectator.'

**14. 29. imaginary college.** Cowley proposed the establishment of a college for the advancement of experimental philosophy.

**15. 12. physiological learning,** knowledge of natural laws, physical science. Physiology in Johnson means the study of nature (Gr. φύσις, nature; λόγος, reason), and is much broader than the modern sense (cf. p. 73, l. 28). Milton wisely advocated the inclusion of science in school-training; but his method of teaching it through the practical treatises of the ancients is open to obvious objections.

**15. 23. Socrates** (469-399 B.C.), the great Athenian philosopher, the nature of whose teaching we know best from the works of his pupils, Plato (Dialogues) and Xenophon (Memorabilia).

**15. 31.** The Homeric quotation is from 'Odyssey,' iv. 392, and means, "whate'er of evil or of good chanceth in thy house."

**16. 5. his nephew Philips.** This was by Edward Philips; but both nephews were authors.

**16. 15. hard study and spare diet,** what has been called by Wordsworth "plain living and high thinking."

**16. 18. he now began.** . . . This is the opening of the second period of Milton's life, his controversial period, lasting about twenty years (1640-1660), between the period of early poetical training and his great creative period. The period is important because (1) his experience as Latin Secretary left a classical impress on all his future works; (2) his controversies gave him a strong theological interest, which powerfully affects 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained.' Even the Deity discusses theological questions in 'Paradise Lost'; and the debates between Jesus and Satan in 'Paradise Regained' are similar in spirit. The controversies also taught Milton endurance and knowledge of the world.

**16. 27. Smectymnuus**—Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, William Spurstow.

16. 29. **Usher** (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh, who founded the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, where he had been Professor of Divinity.

17. 9. **discovers**, reveals, displays, shows (cf. p. 47, l. 16).

17. 20. **generous**, noble (in the Latin sense).

**till which**—*i.e.*, until this scheme of study be reasonably complete.

17. 31. **the common approbation**—*i.e.*, approval of undergraduates in contrast to the Fellows. The cumbrous style and structure of this prose sentence quoted from Milton will be noted.

18. 2. **answerer**, my opponent or critic.

**obtain**, prevail, succeed (a Baconian usage).

18. 4. **she and her sister**—*i.e.*, Cambridge and Oxford.

18. 6. **kecking**, retching.

18. 7. **queasy**, sick, squeamish.

18. 23. **in hand**—*i.e.*, undergoing a course of training.

18. 25. **court-cupboard**, a Shakespearian term for a movable sideboard used at meal-times.

18. 27. **ptisical** or phthisical (from Gr. *φθίσις*, wasting), consumptive, hence feeble.

**hopping short**, dancing as it were convulsively and so missing his point.

18. 28. **in which labour**—*i.e.*, and when his agonised wit had narrowly escaped in this travail (of producing ideas).

18. 31. **thumb-ring posies**. Shakespeare ('1 Hen. IV.') writes of an "alderman's thumb-ring," worn according to medieval custom on the thumb. *Posy* is contracted from *posy* (Gr. *ποίησις*), and means (1) a verse or motto for a ring; (2) a nosegay of flowers (from habit of presenting verses or "posies" along with them).

19. 3. **hell grows darker**. Johnson transfers this masterly description of the malignity of Death and Satan to Milton himself, 'Paradise Lost,' II. 719.

19. 4. **taken by Essex**. The Parliamentarians captured Reading, 1643.

19. 20. **Lady Margaret Leigh**, "Daughter to that good earl"—*i.e.*, first Earl of Marlborough.

20. 7. **Tetrachordon** (lit., in Greek, "of the four strings"—*i.e.*, the chief Scriptural passages on the question) was the third of Milton's four treatises on Divorce. Sonnet XI. alludes to the attacks which followed, "A book was writ of late called 'Tetrachordon,'"

&c.; Sonnet XII. is on the same. Milton's treatises on Divorce horrified friends and foes; in fairness one must remember his provocation and his belief that a true marriage must be a marriage of souls. The conception of woman in his works varies greatly. On the one hand, in his early masque of 'Comus' appears the exquisite figure of the lady who represents Temperance; in 'Paradise Lost' Eve commands admiration and sympathy; and in the sonnet to his second wife ("Methought I saw my late espoused saint") the utmost tenderness is expressed. On the other hand, we have his strong views on the necessary subjection of women, his well-nigh savage tracts on Divorce, and the fierce hatred displayed in drawing the character of "Dalila" (Delilah) in 'Samson Agonistes.' For this last attitude his undutiful daughters were mainly responsible.

20. 10. **famous assembly at Westminster.** The Puritan divines met in 1643 to organise a new National Church.

20. 18. **Howel, in his Letters.** 'Epistolæ Hoelianæ,' published by James Howell, who became Historiographer Royal at the Restoration, 1660.

20. 21. **two sonnets:** XI. and XII.

21. 11. **act of oblivion,** a phrase borrowed from the politics of the Restoration.

21. 16. The 'Areopagitica' of 1644 was Milton's protest against the censorship of the press resolved on by Parliament in 1643.

21. 26. **settlement, security.** Observe the balanced clauses in this passage.

22. 12. **Barbican** runs at right angles to Aldersgate.

22. 23. **fry, fishes' spawn** (contemptuously used).

23. 1. **shift and palliate,** turn to evasions and apologies.

23. 11. **Waller** was, like Essex, a Parliamentary general.

23. 23. **a treatise.** The 'Tenure of Kings and Magistrates' defended the execution of Charles I.

23. 26. The Marquis of Ormond sought in 1649 to unite Irishmen for Prince Charles, who had been proclaimed king (Charles II.) in Ireland.

23. 32. **desire superinduced conviction.** A similar idea to "the wish is father to the thought."

24. 4. **Milton is suspected.** Investigation has not supported this suspicion.

24. 5. **'Icon Basilike'** (εἰκὼν βασιλική) means "the Royal

Image," and professed to be an account of his sufferings by King Charles himself, but was really written by Dr Gauden.

24. 8. **by inserting** should be more closely connected with "interpolated." The order of words is not lucid, owing to the clumsy introduction of the parenthesis "which . . . censure."

**a prayer.** The prayer of Pamela, from Sir Philip Sidney's pastoral tale 'Arcadia' (1590), is one of four appended to (not *inserted in*) the 'Icon Basilike.'

24. 10. **Iconoclastes** (εἰκὼν, image; κλάω, break), "image-breaker," Milton's answer to the 'Icon Basilike.'

24. 20. **Dr Juxon**, Bishop of London, attended Charles I. on the scaffold.

24. 29. **Salmasius** is Latinised form of De Saumaise (1588-1653). He published his 'Defensio Regia pro Carolo I.' November 1649.

24. 32. **Jacobuses**. The Jacobus was a gold coin struck in reign of James I. (value 25s.) The "reported" story was unfounded.

25. 2. **Emendatory criticism**, textual scholarship, emendation of errors in manuscripts.

25. 11. **performed**. This was Milton's 'Defence of the English People,' in Latin, 'Defensio pro Populo Anglicano.'

25. 12. **Hobbes**. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) gave a great stimulus to political science in his 'Leviathan.'

25. 19. **Salmacis**, in Caria in Asia Minor.

**which, whoever**, illustrates Johnson's use of Latin turns of expression.

25. 21. **Tu es Gallus**. The Latin means, "You are a cock" (*i.e.*, a Frenchman), "and, folks say, far too much henpecked."

25. 28. **Nemesis**, the Greek goddess of retribution.

25. 29. **solecism**, σολοικισμός: an offence against strict idiom or syntax, a provincialism. The old explanation, now doubted, referred the term to the corruption of Attic Greek among colonists at Soli in Asia Minor. Distinguish from "barbarism."

25. 31. **Ker**. John Ker published early in the eighteenth century his 'Select Observations on Latin' in two books ('Selectarum de Lingua Latina Observationum libri duo').

25. 32. **propino te**—*i.e.*, I drink to your thrashing by your own grammarians.

26. 9. **a thousand pounds**. This is incorrect; Milton received his official salary and *thanks*.

26. 14. **was not dispersed**, did not circulate.

26. 25. **civic station**, her position in the State.

26. 32. **dismissed**, permitted to go. Cf. "dismissal of Eurydice," p. 70, l. 5, and the well-known conclusion of 'Samson Agonistes'—

"His servants He, . . .

With peace and consolation hath *dismissed*,  
And calm of mind, all passion spent."

27. 5. **in pain for**, anxious to defend.

27. 9. **Juvenal**, born about 55 A.D., the great Roman satirist of vice and social shams in the early empire. The quotation (Satire iv. 14) means, "What can you do when a character is a terror—fouler than any impeachment?"

27. 16. **Spa**. The original Spa in Belgium was noted for mineral springs.

**controvertists**, in writers like Johnson and Tillotson, means "controversialists."

27. 17. **killed by their last dispute**. The remark recalls Byron's lines of 1821:—

"Who kill'd John Keats?

'I,' says the 'Quarterly,'

So savage and tartarly,

'Twas one of my feats.'"

27. 22. **commenced monarch**. Cf. technical use of "commence" without "as," in a phrase like "commence M.D."

27. 29. **to his power**, to the best of his ability.

28. 7. **to discharge**, from discharging.

28. 9. **diverted**, turned aside from its purpose. Compare the usual modern sense.

28. 18. **a poor sonnet**. This is an absolutely staggering criticism for one who does not realise that the eighteenth century could not appreciate sonnets. It neither loved nor composed sonnets. Dr Johnson is as far wrong here as he is in censuring 'Lycidas.' The condemned sonnet (xxiii.) opens with the beautiful fancy:—

"Methought I saw my late espoused saint  
Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave."

28. 21. **Johannis Polypragmatici**, John Busybody.

28. 24. **his nephew**—*i.e.*, John Philips.

28. 26. **Bramhal**, one of the Royalist refugees abroad, ex-Bishop of Derry, became Archbishop of Armagh.

28. 32. **prebendary**, a clergyman of a cathedral church enjoying a prebend (Low. Lat. *præbenda*, from *præbere*) or stipend drawn from the cathedral estate.

29. 5. **gave . . . the means of knowing**. Morus did not reveal Du Moulin's authorship; he only disclaimed authorship himself.

29. 22. **gloriosissimus**. "It may be doubted whether *gloriosissimus* be here used with Milton's boasted purity. *Res gloriosa* is an illustrious thing; but *vir gloriosus* is commonly a *braggart*, as in *miles gloriosus*" (Johnson's note).

30. 21. **Morus es?** . . . Are you a fool? or the god of gibes? or are both one?

30. 23. **transformation**—*i.e.*, of white fruit into black; Ovid, *Metamorph.*, iv. 51, 52, which quoted accurately are—

"An quæ poma alba ferebat  
Ut nunc nigra ferat contactu sanguinis arbor."

30. 26. **ended his controversies**, with the exception of the polemic of his old age against Popery, mentioned p. 56.

31. 18. **discomposed**, badly arranged.

31. 23. **various authors**. Milton's historical work would necessitate consultation of Cæsar, Tacitus, Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, Bede, Holinshed, and others.

31. 29. **nor authors very numerous**. It would be interesting to know how far Milton studied Anglo-Saxon or read the oldest English. The resemblances between Cædmon's Satan and Milton's are often striking (see Guest's 'English Rhythms' for example). Jusserand ('Lit. Hist. of Eng. People,' i. 71) believes that the edition of Cædmon issued by "Junius" may have been known to Milton; and Mr J. L. Robertson ('Eng. Lit.,' 1894) points out that "Cædmon's poems remained in MS. till 1655, when they were printed for the first time, and may therefore have come under the notice of Milton." It should be noted that 1655 is the very point in Milton's life which Johnson has here reached. Professor R. Wülcker discusses "Cædmon und Milton" in 'Anglia,' iv. 401. Prof. Masson doubts the influence of Cædmon on Milton (*Poetical Works*, ii. 140-145).

32. 4. **to Mansus**. See p. 12 and note.

**Arthur was reserved**—*i.e.*, to be the theme of a once

famous heroic poem, 'Prince Arthur,' by Sir Richard Blackmore, 1695. In the Victorian age we may apply the same words to Tennyson's handling of Arthur in the 'Idylls of the King.'

32. 7. **a library**, of Trinity College, Cambridge.

32. 9. **Mysteries**, crude medieval plays representing events in Scripture: the similar miracle plays were based on legends of the saints. The best modern representative is the Passion Play acted every ten years at Ober-Ammergau. It is rather "moralities" than "mysteries" which "consist of allegorical persons." *Mystery* in the sense of a play is the Mid. Eng. *mistere*, O.F. *mestier* (trade), L. *ministerium*: the trade-guilds acted them usually.

32. 11. **first ten lines**. "O thou that with surpassing glory crown'd," &c. ('Paradise Lost,' IV. 32-41). The passage contains the frequently quoted phrase—

"at whose sight all the stars  
Hide their diminish'd heads."

32. 17. **Michael**, "of celestial armies Prince" ('Paradise Lost,' VI. 44), was one of the three Archangels. The others were Gabriel, "chief of the angelic guards" ('Paradise Lost,' IV. 550), and Raphael, the "affable" Archangel ('Paradise Lost,' VII. 40).

32. 20. **Lucifer** (Latin), "Light-bringer," Satan's name before his rebellion.

33. 3. *προλογίζει* recites the prologue.

33. 4. **corrupts**, decays (intransitive).

33. 7. **preserve**. Several editors—e.g., Prof. Ryland and Mr Waugh—retain the ungrammatical *preserves* from early editions. Murphy's edition, 1810, gives *preserve*.

33. 17. **sings** is read in Matthew Arnold's edition; but *sing* is retained by Murphy, Firth, Ryland, and Waugh. The grammar is not consistent in these sketches: we have "Chorus fears" (l. 20); "Chorus bewails" (l. 26); "the Chorus prepare resistance" (p. 35, l. 3); followed by "the Chorus *sings*" (two lines farther on).

34. 18. **frequency**, frequent presence or attendance.

34. 25. **tracing Paradise with a more free office**, roaming through Paradise widely in virtue of his being "chief of the angelic guards" ('Paradise Lost,' IV. 550).

35. 8. **relating and insulting**, insolently telling what he had contributed towards the ruin of man.

35. 11. **confusedly**, in confusion.
35. 14. **entertains**, holds, occupies.
35. 23. **a mask**. See note on the masque of 'Comus' (p. 9, l. 11).
36. 10. **numbers**, verses. Cf. Longfellow's "Tell me not in mournful *numbers*," and Virgil's "*Numeros memini si verba tenerem*" (Eclog. ix. 45).
36. 24. **Raleigh**, "the ever-renowned knight, Sir Walter Raleigh," as the title-page has it (1552-1618). He was a poet and historian as well as a man of action: his 'History of the World' appeared in 1614.
37. 3. **Toland**. John Toland (1670-1722) was a prominent Deist. His 'Life of Milton' was published in 1698.
37. 5. **bated no jot**, based on Sonnet xxii., which rings with Milton's noble courage in his blindness.
37. 12. **enthusiasm**. The prevalent sense of the word in Johnson is (to quote his own Dictionary of 1755), (1) "a vain confidence of divine favour," or (2) "violence of passion"; not so frequently, (3) "elevation of fancy." Bailey's Dict., a contemporary, defines as "an inspiration whether real or imaginary; fanaticism, &c."
37. 14. **Harrington** (1611-1677), author of 'Oceana,' proved his interest in the science of government by his writings and by founding the *Rota Club*.
37. 20. **Griffiths**, a Royalist clergyman.
37. 22. **L'Estrange**, Sir Roger, famous in annals of journalism for starting the 'London Gazette,' 1666. He became Censor of the Press.
37. 23. **petulantly**, saucily, captiously. The adverb refers to the personal allusion to Milton in 'No Blind Guides.'
38. 9. **Act of Oblivion**. The bill passed in 1660.
38. 17. **Goodwin**, an Independent divine, had been appointed President of Magdalen, Oxford, by Cromwell.
38. 22. **August 19**, correctly 29. "Oblivion" is one title of the Act, but it was given by the Commons, not by the king, as Johnson seems to imply.
38. 30. **Burnet**, Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, wrote a 'History of My Own Time' (1724-1734).
38. 32. **Dalrymple** wrote 'Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland.'
39. 6. **Marvel**, Andrew Marvel (1621-1678), the poet, though a Puritan, remained M.P. for Hull after 1660.



39. 7. **Morrice**, Sir William, a friend of Monk, made Secretary of State in 1660.

**Sir Thomas Clarges**, Monk's brother-in-law, helped him to arrange the Restoration.

39. 9. **Richardson**, Jonathan, a painter, published 'Remarks on Paradise Lost,' with a life of Milton. Johnson calls him "the fondest of his admirers" (p. 43).

39. 11. **Betterton**, a noted actor in the time of Charles II.

39. 12. **Davenant** (1605-1668) succeeded Ben Jonson as Poet Laureate, and wrote 'Gondibert.'

40. 10. **pretence**. Milton was arrested on the order passed by the House in June.

40. 30. **Philips relates**. Cunningham's note shows that this is a slip for Richardson.

40. 31. **cheated**. This is incorrect. Milton left all his money to his wife.

41. 20. '**Accidence commenced grammar**'—*i.e.*, Accidence commenced *as* grammar (cf. "commenced monarch," p. 27). Accidence deals with inflections; Milton proposed to elevate it to the rank of grammatical science. The date is 1669, not 1661.

41. 32. **letter to Hartlib**. This was his tract 'Of Education' (see p. 7).

42. 17. **curious**, exact, nice, subtle.

42. 18. **open**, explain, unfold.

42. 24. **whence he drew**. See Appendix on "The Debt of Paradise Lost to Modern Authors."

42. 29. **Voltaire** (1694-1778), French poet, historian, philosopher, and past-master in mockery.

**a farce**, 'Adamo,' a drama in Italian verse on the Fall of Man, by Andreini, 1613.

43. 12. **long choosing, and began late**. Compare 'Paradise Lost,' IV. 26. Milton hesitated long between Scriptural subjects (Sodom, Samson Marrying, Ahab, John Baptist, Christus Patiens) and legendary or historical themes (Macbeth, Vortigern, Alfred).

43. 17. **episodes**, incidents added to the main narrative. The *episodion* in a Greek drama was the portion between two choral odes, and corresponded to our "act."

44. 3. **Wood**, Antony, the writer of 'Athenæ Oxonienses' (1691).

44. 22. **composure**, composition (an antiquated meaning).

44. 26. **parcels**, small parts.

44. 32. **vein**, by metonymy for imagination.  
 45. 3. **never so much**; the modern idiom uses *ever*.  
 45. 9. **Elegies**—*i.e.*, Milton's Latin elegiac verses; from the fifth come the Latin words quoted.  
 45. 24. **sapiens dominabitur astris** means, "The wise man will be master of the stars"—*i.e.*, of his fate. ("A saying ascribed to one of the Ptolemies"—Prof. Deighton.)  
 45. 26. **hellebore**, a plant found at Anticyra and prized by the ancients as a remedy for madness. An extreme madman in Horace is one who could not be cured even by "three Anticyras."  
 45. 30. **possunt quia posse videntur** (*Æneid*, v. 231).  
 46. 14. **an age too late** ('*Paradise Lost*,' IX. 44-46).

"Unless *an age too late*, or *cold*  
*Climate*, or years, damp my intended wing  
 Depressed."

46. 23. **too cold**, these words do not correctly represent Milton's language in the 'Reason of Church Government,' &c.; but they are based on '*Paradise Lost*,' IX. 44-46 just quoted.  
 47. 5. **frosty grovellers**, a forcible description of those who allow cold weather to freeze their energies.  
 47. 6. **not willingly let die**, from the tract on the 'Reason of Church Government,' already quoted, p. 10.  
 47. 10. **dwindle** (rare as a noun), degeneration, shrinking.  
 47. 11. **pigmies** or pygmies, a dwarfish race of Africa alluded to as early as in the '*Iliad*' of Homer. Their stature was a *πυγμή*, about 13 inches.  
**one-eyed monarch**. Proverb, "Among the blind, the one-eyed is king."  
 47. 21. **œstrum**, Latin, from Gk. *οἶστρος*, gadfly, hence violent desire.  
 47. 25. **These bursts of light**. This sentence is eminently Johnsonian in style and ring.  
 48. 7. **his daughters were never taught**. The eldest could not write; the other two could.  
 48. 12. **reducing his exuberance**—*i.e.*, literary pruning.  
 48. 20. **unpremeditated verse**. ('*Paradise Lost*,' IX. 24.)  
 48. 21. **distresses of rhyme**. Milton held blank verse to be more dignified than rhyme, which he called "the invention of a barbarous age," and "to all judicious ears trivial, and of no true

musical delight." The want of the "distresses of rhyme" does not make it easier to write really good blank verse. Johnson's preference was distinctly for rhymed verse.

48. 29. **discountenance**, want of favour.

49. 7. **fallen on evil days**, &c. 'Paradise Lost,' VII. 25-27, inaccurately quoted.

49. 11. **ungrateful**. Johnson's political bias shows through all this passage. Milton may have honestly believed he was in danger, for other Commonwealth men received harsh treatment.

49. 26. **wit**, genius.

50. 9. **simile of the sun eclipsed** ('Paradise Lost,' I. 594-599). The licensing chaplain evidently disliked the notion that an eclipse "with fear of change perplexes monarchs."

51. 4. **Jacob Tonson**, the noted bookseller who published for Dryden, Otway, Pope, Addison, and others. He died in 1736. His grand-nephew, also Jacob, who continued the business, is called by Johnson "a man who is to be praised as often as he is named" (p. 64).

51. 7. **deduction**, consecutive account (*L. deducere*).

51. 32. **women had not then aspired**. Cf. Johnson's remark of Addison's times, "In the female world, any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censured" (p. 157, l. 15). Mrs Behn, however, wrote dramas in Milton's time, and was followed by women-writers such as Lady Winchelsea and Susanna Centlivre (1680-1722). In the eighteenth century women were addressed as readers of the 'Spectator,' and the change is well marked in the novel-reading Lydia Languish of Sheridan's 'Rivals' (1775).

52. 2. **closet of knowledge**, library.

52. 15. **new to all**. Blank verse was not absolutely new: it dates in English literature from the Elizabethan period; but it had been superseded by the heroic couplet.

**disgusting**, distasteful.

52. 21. **did not dare**. But Dryden did, notably in his lines beginning "Three poets in three distant ages born," where Milton appears as a union of Homer and Dante.

53. 17. **eldest daughter**, Anne, the lame daughter who could not write.

54. 15. **fable**, fabulous history.

**Geoffrey** was the twelfth-century chronicler of Britain and the early British kings.

54. 27. Annesley, Earl of Anglesea, worked with Monk for the restoration of Charles.

54. 32. **ancients**, the writers of Greek tragedy—Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—in fifth century B.C.

55. 14. **Elwood**, a slip for Philips. It does not follow that Milton preferred 'Paradise Regained.'

56. 8. **oppugners**, critics—lit., attackers (*L. oppugnare*).

**the old philosophy**, Aristotelianism, attacked in sixteenth century by Ramée (Ramus), a great Parisian logician.

56. 29. **Pope's bulls**, a pun on sense of *bull*, in Irish *bull* (an absurd and unconscious contradiction in terms). *L. bulla* meant the seal affixed to a formal document, later the document itself. *Bull*, in sense of *jest*, is of unknown origin, but was used long before its association with Irishmen (earliest date given in Dr Murray's 'Eng. Hist. Dict.' is 1630).

57. 22. **Benson**, surveyor of buildings to George I.

57. 25. **Philips**, to be distinguished from Milton's nephews, and from Ambrose Philips. This is John Philips, author of the 'Splendid Shilling.'

57. 30. Dean Atterbury was exiled for his Toryism. He belonged to the circle of Swift and Pope.

58. 8. **at the fore-top**, in the middle.

58. 9. **picture which he has given**—

"and hyacinthine locks  
Round from his parted forelock manly hung  
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad."

—'Paradise Lost,' IV. 301-303.

58. 16. **not the rapier, but the back-sword**. A back-sword had one sharp edge: it was a fencing-stick; the rapier was a duelling sword.

58. 17. **he recommends**. "The exercise which I commend first is the exact use of their weapon" (Milton's Prose Works, pub. Bohn, iii. 475). The place of swordsmanship in education is the theme of Plato's 'Laches,' a dialogue on courage.

59. 6. **succession of his practice**, usual order of his employments.

59. 24. **had a thousand pounds**. This is not correct (cf. p. 26, l. 9, note).

59. 30. **grasped.** Milton *bought* this estate when sold by order of Parliament.

60. 9. **literature**, learning, reading : we should say "knowledge of literature." -

60. 11. **two dialects**, Hebrew proper and Aramaic.

60. 18. **Metamorphoses**, a Greek title meaning 'Transformations' or 'The Changeling Forms' (*μεταμορφώσεις*). Fifteen books of legend in Latin hexameters by Ovidius Naso (43 B.C.-18 A.D.)

**Euripides**, born 480 B.C., the third of the great Greek writers of tragedy.

60. 19. **Cradock** wrote memoirs and a tragedy, 'Zobeide.'

60. 32. **Calvinistical.** John Calvin (1509-1564) of Geneva, one of the master minds of Protestant theology, especially advocated predestination.

61. 2. **Arminianism.** Harmensen (Arminius), the Dutch theologian, stoutly combated the Calvinistic tenet of predestination.

61. 4. **Baudius**, a professor at Leyden, died 1613.

61. 5. **Erasmus** (1467-1536), one of the greatest scholars of the Revival of Learning. Born at Rotterdam, he studied and taught in the Netherlands, France, and Italy; was Greek lecturer at Cambridge, and died at Basle. The circumstances of his birth enter into Charles Reade's novel, 'The Cloister and the Hearth.'

62. 4. **a fault.** Johnson was a great believer in prayer, and composed many prayers in English and Latin.

63. 1. **his books**—*e.g.*, Milton's view in many passages of the relation between Adam and Eve, his "absolute rule" ('Paradise Lost,' IV. 301), her "subjection" ('Paradise Lost,' IV. 308). Cf. in 'Samson Agonistes' the attitude of both Samson and the Chorus towards Dalila (esp. ll. 1010-1061).

**Turkish contempt.** Mohammedans exclude women from service in their mosques, and from the Paradise open to men. Dr Johnson's general attitude towards women was one of kindly patronage: his ideal of happiness he described as driving in a post-chaise with a pretty woman who could understand him and could talk.

64. 7. **unideal**, conveying no idea to the mind, unintelligible.

64. 11. **Queen Caroline.** George II. married Caroline of Anspach.

64. 14. **Fort St George**, official name for Madras.

64. 28. **benefit**, a performance the profits of which are handed over to an individual.

64. 31. **Tonson**, grand-nephew of the Tonson mentioned, p. 51, l. 4.

65. 16. **nice**, fastidious (L. *nescius*). Its meanings chronologically are—ignorant, simple, foolish, fastidious, delightful.

65. 20. **by a man**. "I presume Baretti" (Cunningham).

65. 26. **the elegies excel the odes**—*i.e.*, His 'Elegiarum Liber' is finer than his 'Sylvarum Liber,' which contains lyric metres, but also hexameter poems like 'Mansus' and 'Epitaphium Damonis.'

66. 11. **acquired**. Some editors read *required* (in Latin sense, "sought after").

66. 21. **dandling the kid**. See 'Paradise Lost,' IV. 343, 344.

66. 30. **Arethuse**, "O fountain Arethuse," 'Lycidas,' 85, in Sicily, named after the nymph Arethusa.

**Mincius**, "smooth-sliding Mincius" ('Lycidas,' 86), in North Italy. The former is associated with Theocritus, the latter with Virgil. These poets are the ancient masters of Greek and Latin pastoral poetry respectively.

66. 32. **little grief**. T. Warton ('Milton's Minor Poems, quoted by Cunningham) says admirably, "In 'Lycidas' there is perhaps more poetry than sorrow. But let us read it for its poetry." See Introduction on Milton's attitude to 'Lycidas.'

67. 5. **long ago exhausted**. This is grossly overstated. "There is imagery in 'Lycidas,' and that of a high kind, entirely new to English poetry" (Cunningham).

67. 7. **Cowley tells of Hervey**, in a poem on his death.

67. 12. **afield**, philologically *on field*—*i.e.*, to pasture.

68. 3. **irreverend**, irreverent.

**the shepherd**, &c. Johnson might as reasonably denounce "the Good Shepherd" of St John x. 14.

68. 14. **the two pieces**. The student should read the next half-dozen paragraphs with the text of 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' beside him.

68. 17. **Theobald** (1688-1744), noted as an editor of Shakespeare and as the special butt of the earlier form of Pope's 'Dunciad.'

69. 29. **learned comedies of Jonson**—*e.g.*, 'Every Man in His Humour,' 'Every Man out of His Humour.' But Ben Jonson's learning appears even more clearly in his tragedies.

69. 30. **wild dramas**. This phrase Johnson applied to Mystery Plays, p. 32, l. 9. To Johnson's standards of "common-sense"

much would seem incongruous in comedies like the 'Comedy of Errors,' 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' and the 'Tempest.'

**70. 5. complete dismissal**, unreserved liberation, unconditional release. Pluto allowed Orpheus to take his wife, Eurydice, back from Hades by "a conditional release": he had not to look back till the upper world was reached.

**70. 9. His Cheerfulness . . . asperity** illustrates a balanced sentence of simple structure.

**70. 12. nicely**, carefully.

**colours of the diction**, style of the language.

**71. 3. it is deficient**. "Whether 'Comus' be or be not deficient as a drama, whether it is considered as an Epic drama, a series of lines, a mask, or a poem, I am of opinion that Milton is here only inferior to his own 'Paradise Lost'" (T. Warton, quoted by Cunningham).

**71. 19. no precedents**. It was the usage in English drama to keep the Prologue apart from the play; but Johnson stoutly objects.

**71. 20. the discourse of the Spirit—i.e.**, the Prologue (ll. 1-92).

**71. 27. song of Comus**, "Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph" (l. 230).

**72. 6. how fine it is—l. 476**, "How charming is divine philosophy!"

**72. 12. fit of rhyming** (ll. 495-500). The dialogue is rhymed from that point up to l. 512.

**72. 20. affecting**, effective, powerful. Cf. p. 73, l. 20.

**72. 24. harsh in their diction**. To test whether one can appreciate Milton's music, one should read the songs, "Sweet Echo" (230), "Sabrina fair" (859), and "By the rushy-fringed bank" (890), as recommended in the Introduction. See Appendix E.

**72. 32. they are not bad**. For Johnson's attitude to the Sonnets consult p. 28, line 18 (note), and the Introduction.

**73. 1. the eighth**. "When the Assault was Intended," and **the twenty-first**, the first to Cyriac Skinner, extort unwilling praise from Johnson. Milton wrote eighteen English and five Italian sonnets.

**73. 3. never succeeded**. This ignores Shakespeare's Sonnets. They are not strictly Italian in model; but many of Surrey's and of Wyatt's are. Many Elizabethan sonnets "succeeded." It may be said that between the Elizabethan period and Wordsworth, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Milton is our only good sonneteer. Two specimens are given in Appendix D.

**73. 12. consent of critics.** Critics are by no means agreed. Johnson overlooks Aristotle's argument in the last chapter of the 'Poetics' that Tragedy is superior to Epic. Edgar Allan Poe draws up an interesting indictment against Epic in his essay on the 'Poetic Principle.' For Johnson's argument in this paragraph, consult the Introduction on Johnson's attitude to Milton's 'Paradise Lost.'

**73. 28. physiology, knowledge of nature.**

**73. 29. illustrations and images—*e.g.*,** the similes that have formed a "literary tradition" in epic from Homer and Virgil down to such modern narrative poems as Matthew Arnold's 'Balder Dead.'

**73. 31. painting nature and realising fiction,** an antithesis which amounts to idealising the real and realising the ideal.

**74. 5. Bossu.** René le Bossu (1631-1680), the French critic, was long regarded as a standard authority in respect of his treatise on Epic.

**74. 6. fable,** used in the Latin sense (*fabula*) by old critics to denote the story of an epic or plot of a play.

**74. 9. consequent,** "following" (*L. consequens*) the story instead of being the poet's "first work."

**74. 11. to vindicate.** Johnson substitutes Pope's phrase ('Essay on Man,' i. 16) for Milton's "justify the ways of God to man."

**74. 25. destruction of a city,** as in the 'Iliad.'

**74. 26. conduct of a colony,** as in the first half of the 'Æneid.'

**74. 27. foundation of an empire,** as in the second half of the 'Æneid.'

**75. 30. Raphael,** "the sociable spirit" ('Paradise Lost,' V. 221), is sent in Book V. to remind Adam of the duty of obedience.

**76. 1. Michael is regal.** It is Michael who with the cherubim dispossessed Adam and Eve: in Books XI. and XII. he instructs Adam about the destiny of the human race.

**76. 3. Gabriel** is in Book VI. specially appointed, with Michael, to lead the heavenly host against Satan.

**76. 4. fidelity of Abdiel.** The seraph, Abdiel, seeks to dissuade the Satanic crew from revolt: "Among the faithless faithful only he" ('Paradise Lost,' V. 897).

**76. 7. Addison observes,** in 'Spectator,' No. 303. For eighteen consecutive Saturdays Addison's criticisms on 'Paradise Lost' occupied the 'Spectator.'



76. 27. **Moloch** . . . in the battle and the council. His defiance, threats, and blasphemy appear in battle ('Paradise Lost,' VI. 354-362); in council (II. 43-108):—

"The strongest and the fiercest spirit  
That fought in heaven, now fiercer by despair.  
. . . of God, or hell, or worse,  
He reck'd not."

77. 14. **vulgar**, common, ordinary.  
**immerge**, immerse, plunge.

77. 31. *θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς*—lit., "the god from the machine" (L. *deus ex machina*), sometimes introduced by a mechanical contrivance in the Greek stage to disentangle the plot by supernatural interference.

78. 4. **the rule**—*i.e.*, the rule limiting supernatural interference. See Hor. A. P. 191, "Nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus inciderit."

78. 8. **Raphael's relation**, part of Book V., and whole of Book VI.

**Michael's prophetic account**, parts of Books XI. and XII.

78. 15. **Aristotle requires**, in the 'Poetics.'

78. 18. **funeral games**, like those for Patroclus ('Iliad,' xxiii.)

78. 19. **long description of a shield**, like that in 'Iliad,' xviii.

78. 31. **who is the hero**. See discussion of this point in Introduction.

79. 7. **Cato** put himself to death at Utica, 46 B.C., to avoid being captured by Cæsar: he is the hero of Addison's tragedy.

**Lucan**, the Roman poet (39-65 A.D.), whose 'Pharsalia,' in ten books, narrates the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey.

79. 8. **Quintilian**, the great Roman critic of the early Empire, composed a system of Rhetoric in twelve books.

79. 18. **just**, accurate, fitting.

79. 26. Adam's curiosity, Raphael's reproof, and the answer returned by Adam, occupy the earlier part of 'Paradise Lost,' VIII.

79. 29. **opposed to** (L. *oppono*), set beside, confronted with.

80. 4. **sublimate**, refine.

81. 14. **Dryden**, in 'Essay of Dramatic Poesy,' says that Shakespeare "needed not the spectacles of books."

81. 17. **Enna**, in Sicily, whence Pluto (Milton's "gloomy Dis") carried off Proserpine to Hades ('Paradise Lost,' IV. 268-272).

81. 19. **Argo**. Jason's ship in which he sailed in quest of the Golden Fleece.

**Cyanean rocks**, or Symplegades (Milton's "jostling rocks"), were craggy islands in the Bosphorus, fabled to close upon ships attempting to pass between.

81. 20. **two Sicilian whirlpools**—*i.e.*, Scylla and Charybdis, fabled to be rocks or whirlpools or both, on the straits between Sicily and Italy.

81. 23. **notice of their vanity**, with warning as to their fictitious character.

81. 30. **adventitious**, incidental.

81. 31. **shield of Satan** ('Paradise Lost,' I. 284-291).

82. 15. **Ariosto** (1475-1533) wrote 'Orlando Furioso,' an epic on Charlemagne's wars with the Saracens.

**pravity**, wickedness, evil life.

82. 16. '**Deliverance of Jerusalem**'—*i.e.*, 'Gerusalemme Liberata,' by Torquato Tasso (1544-1595).

83. 11. **the port of mean suitors** ('Paradise Lost,' XI. 8, 9).

84. 4. **Bentley**, Richard, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, famous for his editions of classical authors such as Horace and Lucan, and his 'Dissertations on the Letters of Phalaris,' published in 1732 his extraordinary edition of 'Paradise Lost.' He largely altered the text on the ground that errors must have crept in during dictation, and that the reviser foisted into the work verses of his own.

84. 19. **therefore little natural curiosity**. The very strangeness of the situation might conceivably whet a reader's curiosity.

85. 21. **pregnancy**, fulness, amplitude.

85. 22. **radical positions**, fundamental subjects.

85. 26. **licentiousness of fiction**, free indulgence in invention.

86. 6. **deficiency**: *deficiency* is the modern form.

86. 25. **perplexed**, complicated, obscured.

87. 7. **Pandæmonium**—lit., the place of all demons (*πᾶς, παντὸς*, and *δαίμων*), described by Milton as "the high capital of Satan and his peers" ('Paradise Lost,' I. 756, 757).

87. 24. **favourite of children**: this is Book VI.

88. 8. **Prometheus**. In the 'Prometheus Bound,' Violence and Strength by command of Zeus chain Prometheus to the rocks of

Caucasus for introducing fire and the arts among mankind. The tragedy is one of seven extant by Æschylus (525-456 B.C.)

88. 9. **Alcestis**, to satisfy Death, gives herself up instead of her husband, King Admetus.

88. 12. **allegory of Sin and Death** ('Paradise Lost,' II. 648 *sqq.*)

88. 27. **aggravated soil**: 'Paradise Lost,' X. 293, "aggregated (*sic*) soil."

89. 11. **angel's reproof**—*i.e.*, Raphael's, in 'Paradise Lost,' VIII. Cf. p. 79, l. 26.

89. 28. **expatiated**, wandered far and wide (L. *exspatiari*, from *ex* and *spatium*). Cf. Pope, 'Essay on Man,' i. l. 4, "Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man."

90. 3. **Paradise of Fools**, 'Paradise Lost,' III. 493-495, "a limbo large and broad."

90. 6. **Bentley**. See note, p. 84, l. 4.

90. 31. **ancient tragedies**—*i.e.*, Greek tragedies, in which the chorus played an important part by speculating in their odes on each advance in the action.

91. 4. **neither hasten nor retard**. The scene between Samson and his father, Manoah, is sometimes condemned from this standpoint; but it may be defended as contributing to the development of dramatic character, and as preparing the spectator for the *dénouement*, because it nerves Samson to revenge himself upon the Philistines.

92. 7. **Tuscan poets**—*e.g.*, Dante, Ariosto, Tasso.

92. 8. **frequently Italian**. This is strikingly true, if "Italian" is taken to include Latin; but apart from Latin, there are countless similarities in phrase and in general literary effect between Milton and the Italians Dante, Ariosto, Boiardo, and Tasso.

92. 10. **Jonson**—*i.e.*, Ben Jonson (1573-1637), in 'Timber or Discoveries.'

92. 12. **Butler**, Samuel (1612-1680), author of the famous anti-Puritan satire 'Hudibras.'

**Babylonish dialect** is quoted from 'Hudibras,' Part I. canto i.

92. 26. **Surrey is said to have translated one**. In point of fact, he translated two books of Virgil into blank verse—Æn. ii. and iv.—about 1553.

92. 29. **one tending to reconcile the nation**—*i.e.*, 'De Guiana Carmen Epicum,' ascribed to George Chapman ("Auctore G. C.")

**93. 1. Trisino's 'Italia Liberata.'** The subject was the deliverance of Italy from the Goths by Belisarius: Trisino's epic was published in 1548.

**93. 25. an ingenious critic.** From Boswell we learn this was Mr Lock of Norbury Park in Surrey, a man of knowledge and taste ('Life of Johnson,' iv. 43, ed. Hill).

**93. 30. lapidary style.** See note, p. 11, l. 6.

**94. 1. whom Milton alleges as precedents.** In his prefatory note on "the verse," Milton does not name these precedents, but says, "Some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rime."

## NOTES TO LIFE OF ADDISON.

97. 11. **Not to name the school.** Dr Johnson, who had been a schoolmaster, always shows a keen interest in education. See his criticism on Milton as a teacher, pp. 13-16.

97. 20. **Dr Peter Shaw**, a medical man who wrote on scientific subjects.

98. 3. **Corbet** belonged, like Johnson, to Pembroke College, Oxford.

98. 20. **The Chartreux** (of which "Charterhouse" is a corruption) belonged to the religious order of the Carthusians. Founded in the fourteenth century, it became a grammar-school and home for "poor brethren" in the sixteenth.

98. 26. **Sir Richard Steele** (1671-1729) was Addison's school-fellow, or "fag" according to Mr T. Arnold, who gives the date of Steele's birth as 1675 ('Selections from Addison,' Clar. Press edition, Introd.) Thackeray's "poor Dick Steele" is most famous for his 'Tatler.'

98. 32. **habitual subjection**—*e.g.*, Steele felt that Addison gained ground upon him even in his own 'Tatler.' See Lobban's 'English Essays,' Introd. p. xxvii.

99. 22. **demy** (accent the last) is *half* a fellow (Fr. *demi*, Lat. *dimidius*). Somewhat similarly in Aberdeen University a student who has reached his second year is a *semi*, half a graduate.

100. 6. **poem on the Peace.** 'Pax Gulielmi auspiciis Europæ reddita' is the title (Addison's Works, ed. Hurd, 1811, i. 309).

100. 7. **Boileau** (1636-1711), the French poet, belonged to the "classical" school of criticism. His famous work is 'L'Art Poétique,' one of the many critical works in verse modelled in the seventeenth century on Horace's Epistle 'De Arte Poetica.'

**100. 8. Tickell** of Queen's, Oxford, edited Addison's works, 1721, with a biographical preface, from which Johnson quotes here. A notorious quarrel arose over Addison's praise of Tickell's version of the 'Iliad,' Book I., in preference to Pope's.

**101. 3. principal English poets**—*i.e.*, in Addison's own words, those

"That down from Chaucer's day to Dryden's times  
Have spent their noble rage in British rhymes."

**Henry Sacheverell.** Two of his ultra-Tory sermons in 1709 led to his impeachment by the Whigs before the House of Lords. Wild excitement followed the sentence, which prohibited his preaching for three years and ordered his sermons to be burned.

**101. 14. Congreve** (1670-1729) wrote several noted comedies, including 'The Way of the World,' and one tragedy, 'The Mourning Bride,' with its much-quoted opening line, "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast."

**101. 15. Montague**, Charles, afterwards Lord Halifax, had in 1687 along with Prior written the 'City Mouse and Country Mouse' to ridicule Dryden's 'Hind and Panther.'

**102. 6. Smith.** Edmund Smith (or Neal), the subject of one of Johnson's Lives, is admired by him for his critical powers and "intimacy with all the Greek and Latin classics."

**102. 14. the eyes of a poet.** This is apparent in his 'Remarks on Several Parts of Italy.'

**102. 17 'Dialogues on Medals'**—*i.e.*, on ancient coins, as illustrating Greek and Latin poets.

**102. 22. the letter to Lord Halifax**—*i.e.*, 'A Letter from Italy,' which contains the famous line, "And still I seem to tread on *classic ground*." It was translated into Italian by Abbot Salvini, Greek Professor at Florence. The Italian version is given in Addison's Works, Hurd's ed., i. 34 *sqq.*

**102. 23. the most elegant, if not the most sublime:** it is criticised, pp. 135, 136.

**102. 25. Swift informs us—**

"Thus Addison, by lords caress'd,  
Was left in foreign lands *distress'd*."

—Swift, 'Libel on Dr Delany.'

**102. 29. his travels**, entitled 'Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, 1701-2-3.'

**103. 6. twice before.** "One was by Leandro Alberti. Compare 'Boswell by Croker,' p. 372 and p. 446" (Cunningham).

**103. 25. Godolphin.** Lord High Treasurer and Prime Minister from 1702 till 1710.

**104. 8. the simile of the angel** is discussed, pp. 137-139.

**104. 10. Mr Locke.** John Locke (1632-1704) was the author of two treatises 'On Government,' and an 'Essay Concerning Human Understanding' (1690).

**104. 26. Barnes** became Professor of Greek at Cambridge.

**104. 29. a confession.** The acknowledgment of his debt for "many applauded strokes" but not whole "scenes" is to be found in the 'Spectator,' No. 555.

**105. 3. Birmingham's Tower** is part of Dublin Castle.

**105. 27. Swift has recorded—i.e.,** in a letter to Sheridan.

**106. 4. a remark on Virgil.** See 'Tatler,' No. vi., where Steele remarks on Virgil's wisdom in dropping the epithets "Pius" and "Pater" when he describes Æneas meeting with Dido in the cave (Æn. iv.)

**106. 14. April 22 . . . May 26.** Neither date is correct. They should be April 12 for the first 'Tatler' and May 21 for Addison's first contribution—i.e., No. 18, not No. 20. (The facts are given correctly in Professor Courthope's 'Addison,' chap. v.)

**106. 26. 'Spectator.'** The opening number appeared on March 1, 1711. There were 555 daily numbers up to December 6, 1712. A revived issue in 1714 consisted of 80 numbers (called "the eighth volume").

**107. 5. in one of the first papers—i.e.,** No. 3, describing the allegorical vision of the virgin "Public Credit," and evidently friendly in tone to Lord Halifax's financial policy.

**107. 12. Dr Fleetwood**, Bishop of St Asaph. One of his sermons was chosen to be preached by Sir Roger de Coverley's chaplain one Sunday when "the Spectator" was a guest at Coverley Hall ('Spectator,' No. 106).

**107. 21. Giovanni della Casa** (1503-1556), Bishop of Benevento, wrote in Italian 'Galateo,' or 'The Art of Living in the World.'

**107. 22. Baldassare Castiglione** (1478-1529) used his experience in diplomacy to excellent purpose in writing 'Il Cortegiano' ('The Courtier').

**107. 31.** Jean de la Bruyère (1644-1696), through his 'Caractères,' exerted great influence on the essayists and novelists of the eighteenth century by stimulating interest in character.

**108. 24.** *Mercurius Aulicus*, &c.—*i.e.*, the 'Court Mercury,' the 'Country Mercury,' the 'City Mercury.' The first, as the name implies, was Royalist, and appeared at Oxford in 1643.

**109. 7.** The *Royal Society* was constituted by royal charter in 1662 "for the promotion of natural knowledge" by the discussion of scientific questions. The political effect here suggested by Johnson was probably infinitesimal; but the literary effect is often overlooked. The necessity of clear expression in scientific papers was not without its influence in the development of a better English prose style at the close of the seventeenth century.

**109. 30.** Eustace Budgell, Addison's cousin, was a contributor to the 'Spectator.' He published his translation of Theophrastus in 1713. The 'Characters' of Theophrastus is a Greek prototype of La Bruyère's 'Caractères.'

**110. 19.** *Steele*. It is doubtful whether No. 410 is not by Tickell.

**110. 25.** The Spanish quotation means, "For me alone was born Don Quixote, and I for him."

**111. 1.** *irregularities in Sir Roger's conduct*—*e.g.*, in the little country church he will suffer nobody to sleep but himself; he more than half believes in witches; he must make a speech at the Assizes, even if it be "little to the purpose"; he is amusingly rustic in his conduct and utterances when he goes to London and visits Westminster, the theatre, and Vauxhall Gardens; and for his old-fashioned courtesy in wishing good-night to passers-by, he gets mocked as "a queer old put."

**112. 2.** *the tax*—*i.e.*, the Government stamp.

**112. 7.** *if Swift be credited*—*i.e.*, in his 'Journal to Stella.'

**112. 13.** *grand climacteric*. Ancient writers on medicine believed in "climactères" or dangerous points in a man's life, usually multiples of 7 (κλιμακτήρ, round of a ladder). Johnson in his Dictionary quotes from Browne's 'Vulgar Errors,' "The numbers 7 and 9 multiplied into themselves do make up 63, commonly esteemed *the great climacterical* of our lives."

**112. 18.** Colley Cibber (1671-1757), the chief butt in the final form of Pope's 'Dunciad': Poet Laureate, wrote several plays, including the 'Nonjuror,' 1717.



**112. 31.** John Hughes, a contributor of about eleven papers to the 'Spectator,' was a writer of plays and poems. He is included in Johnson's Lives.

**113. 10.** John Dennis (1657-1734), more famous for his criticism than for his plays. Johnson at the close of his 'Addison' quotes largely from Dennis's remarks on 'Cato.'

**113. 12. in the 'Spectator'**—*i.e.*, No. 548, which emphasises the fine moral to be drawn from the distress of a virtuous man.

**113. 15. the fact**—*i.e.*, that Addison did contradict "the established rule of poetical justice."

**113. 24. liquidated**, melted down.

**113. 25. heavily in clouds**, from the opening lines of 'Cato.'

**113. 31. 'Distressed Mother.'** Ambrose Philips in 1711 based it on Racine's 'Andromaque.' It was on the stage when Sir Roger went to the play ('Spectator,' No. 335). The prototype of both dramas was the 'Andromache' of Euripides, about 420 B.C.

**114. 7. Booth**, the actor who played the part of Cato.

**114. 15. Mrs Porter** (not Potter, as in Matthew Arnold's edition) played Lucia in 'Cato.'

**115. 3. the censurer of Corneille's 'Cid.'** Cardinal Richelieu instigated critics to carp at Corneille's tragedy the 'Cid' (1636); but not even the censure of the French Academy could kill it.

**115. 21. scenes of love**—*e.g.*, between Juba and Marcia, or between Lucia and Portius. See analysis of 'Cato' in note to p. 143, ll. 5-9.

**116. 3. Jeffreys**, George, an inferior poet of the time.

**116. 7. Salvini** (not Salvani, as in Matthew Arnold's edition), the abbot who taught Greek at Florence. He also translated Addison's 'Letter from Italy.' See note, p. 102, l. 22.

**116. 12. Bland**, Provost of Eton, and Dean of Durham. His Latin version of Cato's soliloquy before his suicide is given in 'Spectator,' No. 628.

**A tragedy**, entitled 'Caton d'Utique,' by François Michel Deschamps (1683-1747).

**116. 30. The Guardian.** The papers are imagined to be written by or to Nestor Ironside, who is guardian to the Lizard family. This framework has nothing to do with the subjects of many of the papers.

**116. 32. Strada**, a professor of rhetoric at Rome, imitated the great Roman poets in his 'Prolusiones.' The three papers in the

'Guardian,' 115, 119, 122, dealing with Strada are marked by the *hand*, which stands for Addison.

117. 7. **quitted the 'Guardian.'** The 'Guardian' was suddenly dropped, October 1, 1713; five days later appeared the first 'Englishman.'

118. 15. **Augmentation—i.e.,** of the British troops to act against France.

118. 20. **The 'Whig Examiner,'** to oppose the contemporary 'Examiner,' which was Tory.

118. 23. **among the dead men,** from a political song of the day.

119. 3. **to revive.** The revived 'Spectator' ran from June 18 to December 20, 1714 (eighty numbers).

120. 1. **Among these.** There were by Addison eight essays on Wit, eleven on Imagination, eighteen on Milton.

120. 22. **established government.** The 'Freeholder' appeared appropriately after the rising of 1715, and satirised the Jacobites.

120. 31. **Jacobæi, &c.,** from Milton's 'In Salmasii Hundredam.'

121. 1. **Oldmixon** wrote a History of England with strong Whig bias.

121. 15. **he is said.** Probably in error.

122. 1. **Rowe's ballad.** 'Colin's Complaint,' by Nicholas Rowe; best known for his tragedy the 'Fair Penitent' (1703), in which figures the gay Lothario.

122. 27. **I know not how love.** Certainly Socrates' wife, the shrewish Xanthippe, could not have contributed love passages.

123. 4. **Tonson,** the old bookseller. See 'Life of Milton,' p. 51, l. 4.

123. 19. **Dr Tillotson** (1630-1694), though of Puritan leanings, conformed, and had a distinguished career in the Church, becoming Archbishop of Canterbury. His sermons enjoyed a great reputation.

124. 17. **Sir Robert Walpole** (1676-1745), the greatest Whig statesman of the early eighteenth century.

124. 26. **chose themselves for seven—i.e.,** by passing the Septennial Act, 1716.

125. 12. **controvertists** means "controversialists," as in 'Life of Milton,' p. 27, l. 16

125. 15. **little Dicky . . . pamphlets.** The words "whose trade it was to write pamphlets" do not occur in the 'Old Whig.' Had Johnson consulted the 'Old Whig' directly, he would have seen that "Little Dicky" there must apply to the actor who played

Gomez in Dryden's 'Spanish Friar.' As Mrs Napier points out in her edition of the Lives (vol. ii. p. 119), Macaulay first justified Addison on this score.

**125. 29.** Lucan's 'Pharsalia,' i. 1, "Bella plus quam civilia." For Lucan, see p. 79, l. 7.

**126. 2.** the 'Old Whig' is not inserted—*i.e.*, in the edition of Addison's Works by Tickell, in 4 vols., 1721.

**126. 3.** Tickell in his Life—*i.e.*, the Preface to Tickell's edition of Addison's Works, 1721.

**126. 23.** walking upon ashes. Horace, Odes, II. i. 8, "incedis per ignes suppositos cineri doloso."

**127. 2.** Mr Gay. John Gay (1688-1732), the subject of one of Johnson's Lives, and patronised by the great, was author of the 'Beggars Opera' and 'Fables.' Of his plays the best parts were his songs, marked by an ease uncommon at the time. 'Black-eyed Susan' is his best known song.

**127. 30.** Right Hon. James Craggs succeeded Addison as Secretary of State. The date of Addison's dedication of his Works to him is June 4, 1719, thirteen days before he died.

**128. 7.** Swift—*i.e.*, 'Journal to Stella,' October 12, 1710. Swift, writing to Ambrose Philips, September 14, 1708, says, "That man [Addison] has worth enough to give reputation to an age" (Cunningham).

**129. 8.** says Steele, in his Dedication prefixed to Addison's 'Drummer' (Hurd's edition, vi. 316). This Dedication is a very important document on the relations between Addison and Steele.

**129. 13.** Terence. Publius Terentius Afer, an African by birth, made his mark in Rome in the second century B.C. as a writer of comedy.

Gaius Valerius Catullus, b. 84 B.C., the most passionate of the lyric poets of Rome. His love for Lesbia is sung in immortal verse.

**129. 24.** he demanded to be the first. The following familiar lines from Pope's 'Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot' refer to Addison as "Atticus," and attack his jealousy:—

"Bear like the Turk no brother near the throne. . . .  
 Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer. . . .  
 Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike."

**130. 19.** freedom and ease. These words from Steele and Pope's

declaration that Addison "wrote very fluently" are curious alongside of his difficulties in framing a State despatch (p. 120), and in issuing orders in his office (p. 122).

**131. 4. the six concluding lines** must be read to understand Johnson's criticisms:—

" From hence, let fierce contending nations know  
What dire effects from civil discord flow.  
'Tis this that shakes our country with alarms,  
And gives up Rome a prey to Roman arms;  
Produces fraud and cruelty and strife,  
And robs the guilty world of Cato's life."

**131. 11. a detail**, a minute account.

**131. 13. Budgell**, see p. 109, l. 30.

**Philips**, Ambrose, nicknamed "Namby-Pamby" for his odes to children. The 'Distressed Mother' was his adaptation from Racine (p. 113, l. 31).

**Carey**. "This was not Harry Carey, the song-writer, but Walter Carey, the *Umbra* of Pope" (Cunningham). Generally, however, it is thought to be the former, Henry Carey, author of 'Sally in Our Alley.'

**131. 14. Davenant**, probably the grandson of the dramatist, Sir William Davenant, mentioned in 'Life of Milton,' p. 39.

**Colonel Brett**, a man of fashion, who married the divorced Countess of Macclesfield.

**131. 26. drank too much**. Mr Ryland, in his edition of Johnson's 'Addison,' considers the evidence on both sides, and finds it difficult to acquit Addison.

**132. 10. Bernard Mandeville** (1670-1733) wrote the 'Fable of the Bees,' 1714, maintaining that private vices are public benefits.

**132. 12. parson in a tie-wig**. This description of Addison is best explained in Thackeray's words. It was "a time when tye-wigs were only worn by the laity, and the fathers of theology did not think it decent to appear except in a full bottom" ('Eng. Humourists').

**132. 17. Steel once promised Congreve**. "I . . . will defer giving the world a true notion of the character and talents of Mr Addison, till I can speak of that amiable gentleman on an occasion void of controversy" (Dedication by Steele to Congreve,

prefixed to the 'Drummer,' and attacking Tickell's editing of Addison's works; Hurd's edition, 1811, vi. 319).

**132. 27. Stella—i.e.,** Esther Johnson, to whom Swift wrote his 'Journal to Stella' (1710-1716).

**133. 5. says Steele,** in Dedication to Congreve already cited (Hurd's edition, p. 310). Johnson quotes roughly, probably from memory.

**134. 3. above all Greek.** Pope's 'Imitation of Horace Epist.,' Book II. i., l. 26.

**134. 10. turned many.** "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as stars" (Daniel xii. 3).

**134. 20. might have obtained the diadem.** Johnson refers to Swift's remark about Addison as a possible king, p. 128.

**134. 26. a great writer.** Bishop Warburton of Gloucester, besides writing much theology, edited Pope's Works in 1752.

**135. 16. something in it of Dryden's vigour.** The "something" is very small. Dryden is immeasurably superior to Addison both in 'A Song for St Cecilia's Day, 1687,' and in 'Alexander's Feast, an Ode in Honour of St Cecilia's Day.' Dryden has lines that haunt the memory, such as

"The diapason closing full in man."

"What passion cannot music raise and quell?"

"None but the brave deserves the fair."

**135. 17. 'Account of the English Poets.'** Addison's critical attitude is that of his times: "Old Spenser . . . amused a barbarous age," by which he means the Elizabethan period. The humour and language of Chaucer have no charm for him:—

"In vain he jests in his unpolish'd strain,

And tries to make his readers laugh in vain."

It is well to remember that this was a youthful performance by Addison, in contrasting Tennyson's attitude on those very points:—

"Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath

Preluded those melodious bursts that fill

The spacious times of great Elizabeth

With sounds that echo still."

—'A Dream of Fair Women.'

**135. 28. Addison never printed the piece.** "This is a mistake. . . . The poem is in Dryden's 'Fourth Miscellany,' 1694, with Addison's name to it" (Cunningham).

**136. 2. broken metaphor** — *i.e.*, the "mixed metaphor" of modern works on rhetoric.

**136. 14. Dr Warton**—*i.e.*, Joseph Warton (1722-1800), brother of Thomas Warton, who wrote the 'History of English Poetry' (1774-1778).

**136. 20. this year of victory, 1704.**

**137. 3. borrowed it**, at the end of 'Eloisa to Abelard.' As is often the case, Johnson does not quote exactly.

**137. 11. the simile of the angel.** In view of Johnson's criticism, the whole passage should be read:—

"'Twas then great Marlbro's mighty soul was prov'd,  
That in the shock of charging hosts unmov'd,  
Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,  
Examin'd all the dreadful scenes of war,  
In peaceful thought the field of death survey'd,  
To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid,  
Inspir'd repuls'd battalions to engage,  
And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.  
So when an angel by divine command,  
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,  
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,  
Calm and serene, he drives the furious blast,  
And, pleas'd the Almighty orders to perform,  
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm."

**137. 12. in the 'Tatler'**—*i.e.*, in No. 43 apropos of a debate on "What is the true sublime?" The exact words declare the "sublime image" of the angel to be "as great as ever entered into the thought of man."

**137. 24. Horace says of Pindar.** Od. IV. ii. 5:—

"Monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres  
Quem super notas aluere ripas,  
Fervet immensusque ruit profundo  
Pindarus ore."

137. 28. as the bee wanders. Hor. Od. IV. ii. 27 :—

“Ego apis Matinae  
More modoque  
Grata carpentis thyma per laborem  
Plurimum circa nemus . . .  
Carmina fingo.”

138. 4. **Isocrates.** Athenian orator of fourth century B.C., noted for the grace and dignity of his style.

139. 2. **Dr Madden**, called “Premium Madden,” because he suggested regular examinations and prizes at Trinity College, Dublin.

139. 7. ‘**Rosamond**’ is a very slight treatment of Henry II.’s love for Rosamond, the jealousy of Queen Eleanor, and her poisoning of Rosamond, who proves to have been only drugged.

139. 10. **praise of Marlborough.** Angels in Act III. show King Henry the Blenheim Castle of the future—“The great reward for Anna’s mighty chief prepar’d.”

139. 12. **Good luck improved by genius**, a noteworthy phrase for the two factors in greatness—“the man” and “the hour.”

139. 17. **expletive**, “padding” to fill up the line (L. *explere*).

139. 18. **two comic characters.** Sir Trusty is keeper of Rosamond’s Bower in Woodstock Park; Grideline is his wife. Their squabbling gives rise to a good deal of fun.

139. 22. **grossly absurd.** Act II. sc. vii. of the opera is a short and grotesque scene, beginning with Sir Trusty’s exclamations—

“A breathless corpse! what have I seen?  
And follow’d by the jealous queen.”

**The whole drama is airy and elegant.** “The whole drama” is likely to strike many readers as intensely silly.

139. 24. **If Addison had cultivated.** Johnson is a doubtful guide to “the lighter parts of poetry.” See Introduction.

139. 28. **the late collection**—*i.e.*, of British Poets, for which the Lives were originally composed as prefaces. It was not intended to include dramas.

140. 6. **nothing here excites or assuages.** Johnson means that ‘Cato’ does not fulfil the Aristotelian dictum on the function of tragedy, as purging the mind of pity and fear and similar emotions.

140. 27. **emulation of parties.** See p. 114, l. 12.

**141. 15. violent runs.** Plays did not "run" for hundreds of nights in the eighteenth century.

**142. 3. without doors,** out of doors, outside the theatre.

**143. 5-9. Cato . . . Cæsar . . . Syphax . . . Juba . . . Portius . . . Marcus.** These names and the rest of Dennis's criticism will be best understood from an epitome of the plot of Addison's 'Cato.' Cato at Utica is the last strenuous supporter of liberty against the domination of Julius Cæsar, 46 B.C. The senator Sempronius is the hypocrite of the play, ready to betray Cato to Cæsar, because Cato has refused him his daughter Marcia. The accomplice of Sempronius is old Syphax, general of the Numidians, who fails, however, to detach his prince, Juba, from Cato's side. Juba loves Marcia. Portius and Marcus, Cato's sons, are rivals for the hand of Lucia, a senator's daughter. Lucia favours Portius; but when Marcus, ignorant of his brother's love, asks him to plead his cause, Lucia solves the dilemma with an oath "never to mix plighted hands," if Portius's success must throw his brother on his fate. The disentanglement begins when Sempronius fails to carry off Marcia: entering Cato's hall disguised as Juba, he is slain by Juba himself. The other traitor Syphax then resolves to desert to Cæsar with his horsemen, and Marcus falls in a gallant endeavour to hold the town gate, where he slays Syphax. Cato hears the tidings with stoical fortitude, and falls on his sword rather than yield to Cæsar. Discovered on the point of death, he sanctions with his last words the unions between Portius and Lucia, Juba and Marcia.

**143. 17. mirror of life.** Cf. the phrase quoted in Facciolati and Forcellini's 'Totius Latinitatis Lexicon' from Cicero (ap. Donat. in fragm. de Tragoed. et Comoed.), "*Comœdia est imitatio vitæ, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis*" ("Comedy is a copy of life, a mirror of habit, a picture of reality"). 'Hamlet,' Act III. sc. ii., "Playing whose end . . . is to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature."

**145. 11. Bayes.** The burlesque called the 'Rehearsal' (1671) by the Duke of Buckingham and others satirised Dryden under the name of Bayes. It was designed to satirise the "heroic drama" of the Restoration period.

**league it away.** "League" in most editions; but, as Mr Waugh points out, "feague it away" is the reading in the fourth edition of the 'Rehearsal,' 1683, while "whew it away" is the reading of the first edition.



**146. 17. the O's, the Macs, and the Teagues** — Irish Papists hostile to England.

**146. 18. Eustace Commins** "is doubtless the Eustace Comyne who in November 1680 presented information to the House of Commons of a horrid plot of the Papists in Ireland" (Mr Ryland, 'Addison').

**146. 22. J. G.** is Sir John Gibson, Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth.

**150. 3. impertinent**, unsuitable.

**150. 18. bringing it on the stage.** This is inaccurate. In a Greek play the chorus went through its performance in the orchestra before the stage.

**151. 4. bully**, usually "a hectoring boisterous fellow," to quote Bailey's Dict. (1776 edition); but was a not uncommon term of familiarity—*e.g.*, "bully Bottom" of 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' Act III. sc. i.

**152. 3. whimsies**, fanciful notions.

**152. 27. sign of the Gaper.** 'Spectator,' No. 47, refers to a Dutch standing jest of hanging up in several of their streets "the head of an idiot dressed in a cap and bells, and gaping in a most immoderate manner."

**154. 10. candle-snuffer**, a minor attendant in a theatre.

**154. 15. eavesdropping**, or *eves-dropping* (Matthew Arnold). The form eve-dropping (retained in Mr Waugh's edition) is philologically wrong. *Eaves* is not a plural, but the modern representative of the A.S. *efese*, edge of a roof.

**154. 29. Plato's treatise.** The 'Phædo,' in which Socrates, under sentence of death, argues the question of a future life.

**155. 6. translated lately by Bernard Lintot.** This was Theobald's translation, published by the bookseller Lintot.

**155. 17. lecture**, reading (in the literal, not the modern, sense).

**156. 7. Kneller.** Sir Godfrey Kneller (1648-1723) was an eminent portrait-painter. There are several portraits of Addison by Kneller, including the Kit-cat Club picture painted for Tonson, and the Northwick Park picture engraved for Miss Aikin's 'Life of Addison.' See abridged list, Johnson's Lives, edition Napier, ii. 127, and fuller list in Bloxam's 'Register' of Magdalen College, vi. 92.

**156. 12. licentiously paraphrastical** is "Johnsonese" for *free*.

**156. 22. versification which he had learned from Dryden**—*i.e.*, the heroic couplet, each line consisting of ten syllables (or five accents).

**156. 26. triplets**, sets of three rhyming lines of five accents or ten syllables each.

**Alexandrines**, lines of six feet or twelve syllables—*e.g.*, the last line of a Spenserian stanza. Pope manufactured an example in his 'Essay on Criticism' :—

“ A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.”

The alexandrine, in rhyming couplets, is the normal line in French tragedy. The name arises from its use in the 'Alexandreis,' a French romance poem of the twelfth century on Alexander the Great. Both triplets and alexandrines were common variations among heroic couplets. Cowley first used alexandrines so. Dryden furnishes many instances. Johnson discusses the point in his Dryden (Lives, edition Napier, i. 479 *sqq.*)

**156. 30. 'Rosamond'** is in octosyllabic verse, varied by many kinds of shorter lines.

'Cato' is in blank verse.

**157. 15. in the female world.** Compare Johnson's remark in his 'Milton,' p. 51, l. 32, "The women had not then aspired to literature."

**157. 28. his prefaces.** Some of Dryden's best critical essays appeared as prefaces—*e.g.*, his 'Discourse on Satire' prefixed to his translation of Juvenal; and his 'Discourse on Epic Poetry' prefixed to his translation of Virgil's 'Æneid.'

**158. 15. beauties of 'Chevy Chase.'** Addison treats these in 'Spectator,' 70 and 74.

**158. 16. ridicule of Wagstaff.** 'A Comment on the History of Tom Thumb,' by William Wagstaffe, M.D., was written in ridicule of Addison's appreciative essays on 'Chevy Chase.'

**158. 29. lifeless imbecility.** Johnson and his age cared little for ballads; but the publication of Bishop Percy's 'Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,' 1765, was significant of a coming change in taste. Contrast with Johnson's chilling judgment the enthusiastic words of Sir Philip Sidney, "I never heard the old song of 'Percy and Douglas' that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet" ('Apologie for Poetrie,' published 1595).

**159. 2. 'Remarks on Ovid'** accompanied Addison's translations from the 'Metamorphoses' (Addison's Works, edition Hurd, 1811, i. 171).

**159. 5. on Wit and on . . . Imagination.** These are essays in the 'Spectator.'

**159. 15. outsteps the modesty of nature.** "O'erstep" is Shakespeare's word with this phrase ('Hamlet,' Act III. sc. ii.) *Modesty* here means "moderation" (L. *modestia*).

**159. 23. enthusiastic.** Johnson means "wildly emotional." The sense of *enthusiasm* in the eighteenth century has already been noted, p. 37, l. 12.

**160. 9. snatch a grace.** The phrase is from Pope's 'Essay on Criticism':—

"And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art."

**160. 17. if his language . . . Anglicism.** This is rather a tautological remark by Johnson: it amounts to saying that fewer peculiarly English constructions and expressions would have made Addison's style less English.

## APPENDIX.

A.—JOHNSON'S LETTER TO THE EARL OF  
CHESTERFIELD.

*To the Right Honourable  
The Earl of Chesterfield.*

*February 7, 1755.*

MY LORD,—I have been lately informed by the proprietor of the 'World' that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le Vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*; that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending: but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of

publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

My lord,

Your lordship's most humble,

Most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

## B.—JOHNSON'S FAVOURITE PASSAGE IN POETRY.

"Johnson said that the description of the temple in 'The Mourning Bride' was the finest poetical passage he had ever read: he recollected none in Shakespeare equal to it."—Boswell's 'Life of Johnson,' chap. xvii.

CONGREVE, 'THE MOURNING BRIDE,' Act II. sc. i.

"No, all is hushed, and still as death.—'Tis dreadful!  
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,  
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,  
To bear aloft its arched and ponderous roof,  
By its own weight made steadfast and immoveable

Looking tranquillity ! It strikes an awe  
 And terror on my aching sight ; the tombs  
 And monumental caves of death look cold,  
 And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.  
 Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice :  
 Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear  
 Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.”

### C.—THE DEBT OF ‘PARADISE LOST’ TO MODERN AUTHORS.

There has been no lack of discussion on supposed sources of ‘Paradise Lost.’ The four works most likely to have furnished hints to Milton are—(1) Andreini’s ‘Adamo,’ 1613 ; (2) Cædmon’s Paraphrase (see p. 31, l. 29, note) ; (3) ‘Adamus Exul,’ of 1601, a juvenile Latin tragedy by Hugo Grotius, whom Milton met in 1638 ; (4) Vondel’s ‘Lucifer,’ a five-act tragedy in Dutch Alexandrines played at Amsterdam in 1654. But the influence of these is in no case absolutely proved, and has been often over-stated.

The following facts may serve as a chronological outline : In 1727 Voltaire suggested Milton’s debt to Andreini’s ‘Adamo,’ which he may have seen performed at Milan. In 1750 appeared, with a Preface by Samuel Johnson, William Lauder’s ‘Essay on Milton’s Use and Imitation of the Moderns in his Paradise Lost’ : this attempted to prove Milton a plagiarist by citing parallels from a large number of modern Latin writers ; but its forgeries were exposed by Rev. J. Douglas, and Lauder was forced to sign a confession dictated by Johnson. In 1807 Sharon Turner maintained that Cædmon’s paraphrase of Genesis had influenced Milton. In 1879 Mr Gosse, in one of his ‘Studies of the Literature of Northern Europe,’ moderately concluded that parts of Vondel had deeply impressed Milton. In 1885 Mr G. Edmundson in his ‘Milton and Vondel : A Curiosity in Literature,’ by means of an array of parallel passages, sought to prove that Milton had borrowed from Vondel’s works at large, and not simply from the ‘Lucifer.’

The whole subject is discussed by Prof. Masson in his edition of Milton’s Poetical Works, ii. 120-164. In particular, answering Mr Edmundson, he shows that over nineteen-twentieths of the

parallels are inevitably due to the hereditary character of the theme, which is chiefly Biblical. It may be allowed that Milton knew Dutch, and that even in his blindness he had Vondel read to him, without admitting the extensive pillage in which Mr Edmundson believes.

#### D.—TWO OF MILTON'S SONNETS.

[See Johnson's remarks, pp. 72, 73, and the notes on that passage.]

##### ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ;  
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,  
Forget not : in thy book record their groans  
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled  
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans  
The vales redoubled to the hills and they  
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow  
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway  
The triple Tyrant ; that from these may grow  
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,  
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

##### ON HIS BLINDNESS.

When I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest he returning chide,  
“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”  
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies : " God doth not need  
 Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best  
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
 Is kingly : thousands at his bidding speed,  
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest ;  
 They also serve who only stand and wait."

### E.—THREE SONGS FROM MILTON'S 'COMUS.'

[See note on Johnson's 'Milton,' p. 72, 24.]

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen  
 Within thy airy shell,  
 By slow Meander's margent green,  
 And in the violet-embroidered vale  
 Where the love-lorn nightingale  
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well :  
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair  
 That liketh thy Narcissus are ?  
 O, if thou have  
 Hid them in some flowery cave,  
 Tell me but where,  
 Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere !  
 So may'st thou be translated to the skies,  
 And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies !

---

Sabrina fair,  
 Listen where thou art sitting  
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,  
 In twisted braid of lilies knitting  
 The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair ;  
 Listen for dear honour's sake,  
 Goddess of the silver lake,  
 Listen and save !



By the rushy-fringed bank,  
 Where grows the willow and the osier dank,  
     My sliding chariot stays,  
 Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen  
 Of turkis blue, and emerald green,  
     That in the channel strays :  
 Whilst from off the waters fleet  
 Thus I set my printless feet  
 O'er the cowslip's velvet head,  
     That bends not as I tread.  
 Gentle swain, at thy request  
     I am here !

#### F.—CATO'S SOLILOQUY BEFORE HIS SUICIDE.

[See Johnson's 'Addison,' pp. 154, 155.]

It must be so—Plato, thou reason'st well :  
 Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
 This longing after immortality ?  
 Or whence this secret dread and inward horror,  
 Of falling into nought ? Why shrinks the soul  
 Back on herself, and startles at destruction ?  
 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us ;  
 'Tis Heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,  
 And intimates eternity to man.  
 Eternity ! thou pleasing, dreadful thought !  
 Through what variety of untried being,  
 Through what new scenes and changes must we pass ?  
 The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me ;  
 But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.  
 Here will I hold. If there's a Power above  
 (And that there is all Nature cries aloud,  
 Through all her works), he must delight in virtue ;  
 And that which he delights in must be happy.  
 But when ! or where—this world was made for Cæsar.  
 I'm weary of conjectures—this must end them.

[*Laying his hand on his sword.*]

Thus I am doubly armed : my death, my life,  
 My bane and antidote, are both before me.  
 This in a moment brings me to an end ;  
 But this informs me I shall never die.  
 The soul, secured in her existence, smiles  
 At the drawn dagger, and defies its point,  
 The stars shall fade away, the sun himself  
 Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,  
 But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,  
 Unhurt amidst the war of elements,  
 The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.  
 What means this heaviness that hangs upon me ?  
 This lethargy that creeps through all my senses ?  
 Nature oppressed, and harassed out with care,  
 Sinks down to rest. This once I'll favour her,  
 That my awakened soul may take her flight,  
 Renewed in all her strength, and fresh with life,  
 An offering fit for heaven. Let guilt or fear  
 Disturb man's rest ; Cato knows neither of them ;  
 Indifferent in his choice to sleep or die.

—Addison's 'Cato,' Act V. sc. i.

#### G.—JOHNSON RELICS IN PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

1. The Portrait by Reynolds : in the Senior Common Room.
2. An inferior portrait, said to be Reynolds (but this is doubtful) :  
 in the Master's House.
3. A copy of the National Gallery Reynolds : in the Hall.
4. A small pencil sketch, framed : in the College Library.
5. A bust by Bacon, copied from the statue in St Paul's Cathedral : in the Library.
6. The desk which Johnson used in writing the Dictionary : in the  
 Library.
7. The desk which Johnson used when at Edial Hall : in the  
 Library.
8. His teapot, old Worcester china, blue and white : in the second  
 Common Room. It holds about two quarts.

9. His cider-mug, old Worcester china, blue and white : in the second Common Room.
10. Two College exercises by Johnson : in the Library.
11. A few of his letters : in the Library.
12. The deeply interesting MS. of the 'Prayers and Meditations' : in the Library.
13. A copy of the 'Political Tracts,' with "To Sir Joshua Reynolds from the Authour," written in Johnson's hand.

There is also a copy of Isaac d'Israeli's 'Curiosities of Literature' which belonged to Mrs Piozzi, in two volumes, interleaved, and containing numerous MS. notes in her beautiful hand. Many of these notes refer to Johnson.

An account of nearly all these relics may be found in Maclean's 'History of Pembroke College' (Clarendon Press, 1897).

THE END.



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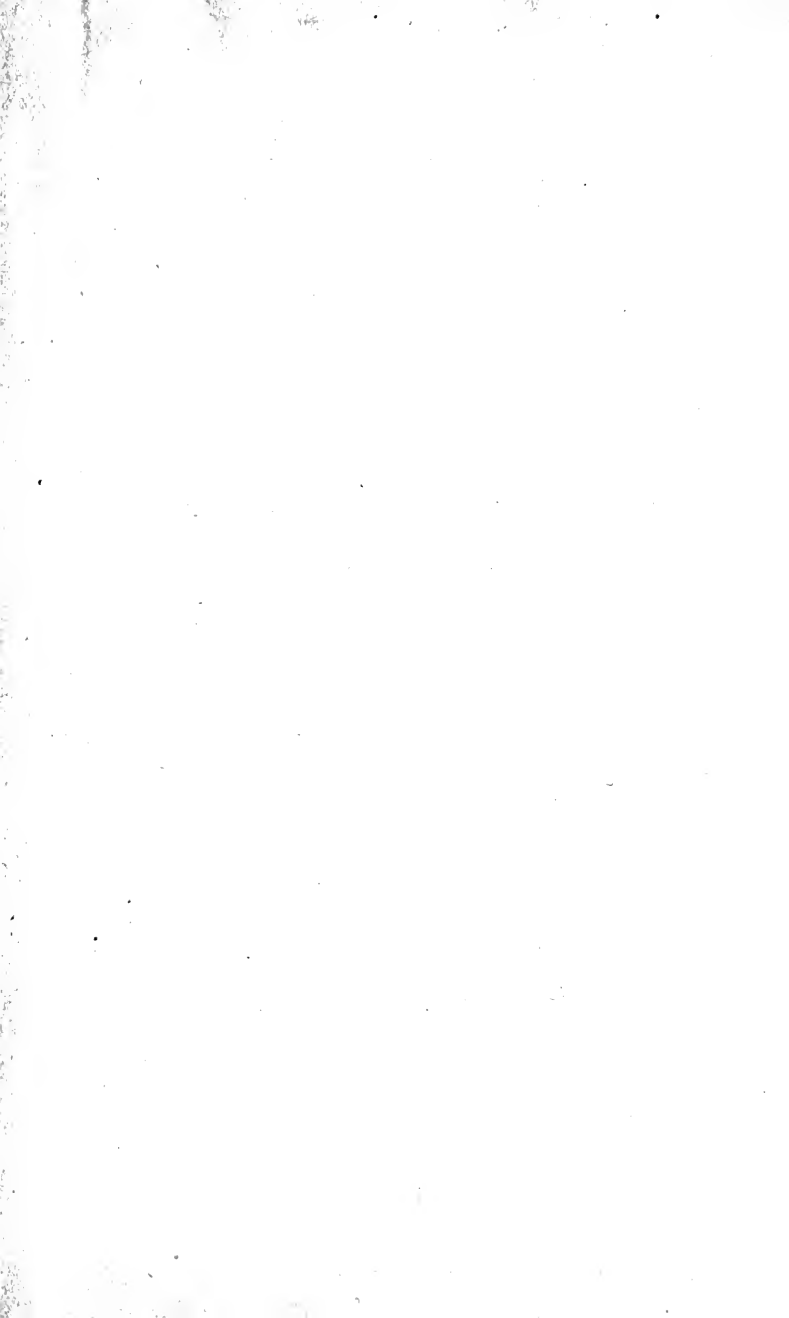
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